University of Alberta Library
0 1620 3416670 0

For Reference

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS ROOM

Ex libris
Universitatis
Albertaensis

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
QVAECVMQVE VERA

CANADIAN ATTITUDE TO WORLD AFFAIRS
AS REFLECTED IN HANSARD,
1867 - 1914.

by

Gordon W. Smith, B.A.

A Thesis submitted to the University of Alberta in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
University of Alberta Libraries

https://archive.org/details/canadianattitude00smit

Thesis
1948
#22

CONTENTS

Page

Introduction i

Chapter

I The First Macdonald Administration (1867-1873) 1

II The Mackenzie Administration (1873-1878) 34

III The Last Days of Macdonald (1878-1891) 60

IV Between Macdonald and Laurier (1891-1896) 88

V The Administration of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Part I (1896-1904) 105

VI The Administration of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Part II (1904-1911) 136

VII From the Accession of Borden to the Outbreak of War (1911-1914) 167

Conclusion 195

Bibliography 202

Introduction

Public opinion is a mysterious and vital force. It is a thing of uncertain stability, which fluctuates with the trend of events and changes with the passage of time. Yet upon it depends to a great extent the legislation enacted by our representative bodies, and it plays a large part in shaping both domestic and foreign policies. It is by now a commonplace feature of our democratic system that a government must, if it wishes to maintain its position in power, take into consideration the wishes of the people. But how can the will of the people be accurately ascertained? Undoubtedly much more can be done in this direction than in past centuries, when facilities for such enterprises were lacking and public opinion was not considered a matter of great importance. In this modern age, with its wide franchise, frequent elections, efficient communications, and special devices and guides such as polls of public opinion, newspapers, and radio, it is comparatively easy to ascertain the state of the public mind.

But does the problem end here? If investigation revealed a unanimity of opinion matters would be greatly simplified, but unfortunately this is not usually the case. It is indeed a rare and happy condition in a democratic country when public opinion on some issue of major significance is uniform and united. Far more often than not are to be found a great variety of conflicting viewpoints which prevent a unanimous stand, and which stem from religious, racial, political, sectional, economic and other differences. Although it is a cardinal principle of democracy that the will of the majority shall prevail, history has demonstrated that it can be fatal, and usually is at least unjust, to treat with too much indifference the wishes of minority groups. The task of the politician is immeasurably complicated by having a variety of viewpoints to deal with, and the same is true of anyone who attempts to carry on research in a field which deals with public opinion.

In the following pages an attempt has been made to investigate the Canadian attitude to events of international significance between 1867 and 1914 by means of an examination of the Debates of the House of Commons

during those years. It is readily apparent that in many cases one cannot discover a "Canadian" attitude to a given situation or event, for the very good reason that no essentially Canadian attitude existed, owing to the fundamental differences of opinion characteristically held by individuals and groups. This is particularly true of a nation such as Canada, which unfortunately is rife with sectional differences of opinion and racial and religious antagonisms. It is also especially true of an organization such as the House of Commons, which is essentially and necessarily divided into opposing groups, among which violent and fundamental differences of opinion are inevitable. More than that, it is frequently questionable whether a member's speeches reveal with any great accuracy either his own real opinions or those of the constituents he represents, because such considerations are often put aside in the interests of party unity and discipline, so necessary to carry through the party program. Finally, Hansard gives at best a very incomplete picture of Canadian public opinion. Not only are the members a very small group of Canadian citizens, but also a great body of very significant discussion

takes place outside the doors of the Commons' chamber. To get a complete picture one would have to have access to a great variety of other sources -- to documents dealing with diplomatic negotiations, to official and private correspondence, to the proceedings of cabinet meetings and party caucuses, to the speeches of election campaigns (a poor guide if we choose to be cynical), and also to a wide variety of newspaper and magazine articles and other published material.

In view of the deficiencies of Hansard, this work cannot aspire to describe with complete accuracy and thoroughness Canada's attitude to international affairs between 1867 and 1914. It attempts to give as complete a picture as possible with the material available, and also to note the deficiencies of Hansard as a guide to public opinion.

The general plan has been to arrange the chapters to follow as closely as is possible and convenient the various parliaments of the years between 1867 and 1914. Each chapter contains a brief introductory survey of Canadian affairs during the period under discussion, followed by another brief survey of

international affairs during the same period. Next is given a longer treatment of Canada's international relationships, again during the same period, and the views of the members on current international problems. In the early chapters these last two sections were separated, but in the last three chapters it has been found advisable to place them together, because of the growing connection between the two and the increasing attention that was being paid to international affairs by the members in their speeches in the House of Commons.

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST MACDONALD ADMINISTRATION (1867-1873)

A. The Achievement of Confederation in Canada 1867-1873

In the year 1867 the Dominion of Canada was born. The efforts of the far-sighted group of men now commonly known as the Fathers of Confederation culminated in London on July 1, when by the so-called British North America Act the new Dominion was brought into being. It was of rather insignificant size then, containing only the Maritime provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; and the Central provinces of Ontario and Quebec, formed from the older colony of Canada, and corresponding roughly to what had formerly been Upper and Lower Canada. Both Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island had for the moment decided to remain aloof, in spite of attempts to induce them to join. The federation in 1867 thus consisted of only four small, scattered, and disunited provinces, and the fears of its founders that the union could not survive are easily understandable. The population of the new Dominion was no more impressive than its size amounting to

only a little more than three millions of people, and lacking racial, religious, and political homogeneity.

Confederation was the culmination of a series of historical events and processes which had been developing for years, and was inevitable if independence from the United States was to be maintained. It was achieved with great difficulty however, chiefly because of the many great obstacles that stood in the path and the many forces which actively resisted the union.

Perhaps the outstanding difficulty was the indifference or actual hostility towards the idea of union shown by the majority of the Canadian people. When Confederation was finally achieved, it was not the result of united action by the nation as a whole, but was rather the work of a vigorous minority. There was the ever present desire of certain sections of the populace to end the British connection and join the United States, a desire which in view of the support it was receiving from sources south of the border constituted a dangerous threat to union. An influential group in the United States, backed by such powerful interests as the New York Herald, was campaigning actively for the annexation of the British North American colonies, and the association with the group of such personalities as Secretary Seward lent at least a

semi-official atmosphere to their campaign. Another difficulty was the understandable fear of the French Canadians in Lower Canada that a union of the colonies would cause them to be swamped by an overwhelming majority of English speaking people. The inhabitants of the Maritimes also felt a similar reluctance to join their fortunes with the much more populous territory of Canada, especially as the two areas were separated by many miles of little but trees and mountains. Other factors such as the lack of community of interest among the different colonies, and serious difficulties in arranging the terms of the proposed union, only added to the problem. To cap it all, the Imperial Government in Great Britain had abandoned its centuries-old policies of mercantilism and colonialism, and had embarked on new theories of "laissez-faire" and free trade which made colonies appear both less necessary and more burdensome. Under these circumstances Imperial interest in colonies had waned, especially during the 1850's and '60's, and the absence of positive action from that quarter, if not actually causing delay in union, had at least permitted matters to drift.

However there were a number of other forces which impelled the colonies towards Confederation, and these in the end prevailed. Probably the outstanding one was a

steadily growing fear of the United States. Before the outbreak of the Civil War relations between the colonies and the United States had been fairly cordial, and during the early part of the war there was a distinct feeling of sympathy for the Northern States, the champions of slave emancipation. Within a few months this sympathetic feeling had changed to one of suspicion and fear, which was a natural outcome of the strained relations which were developing between the United States and Great Britain on the one hand and the United States and Canada on the other. English commercial and manufacturing interests, and also the aristocratic and governing classes, supported the Confederacy, and recognized it as a legal government. Resentment of the North soon manifested itself in a variety of ways offensive to the British colonies, including a press campaign for the annexation of British North America. The Trent and Alabama affairs served further to embitter relations between Great Britain and the United States, while the Canadian-American border was kept in a continual state of tension by raids of Confederate refugees from the Canadian side into American territory, and of bands of Irish-Americans known as Fenians from the American side to the Canadian. A deterioration of commercial relationships was caused by the American denunciation in 1866

of the Elgin Reciprocity Treaty of 1854. The end of the Civil War in 1865 left the United States a single unit, with probably the largest army in the world, which was still eager for action, and British North America seemed to be the natural outlet for its aggressive tendencies. It was felt by British subjects in North America that in the event of an outbreak between them and the United States, or between Britain and the United States, their land would inevitably become the battleground, and consequently they began to take cognizance of their own position, and to realize that by joining together they would be able to present a more united front to their potential enemy.

Certain economic aspects also made the idea of union appear attractive. Railway interests gave their support, as they were planning a railway to link Canada with the Maritimes, and the proposed railway and union appeared to be in many ways dependent on each other. Also a union would facilitate a lowering or complete removal of inter-colonial tariff barriers, a necessary step towards lower prices and increased trade between the various units.

Another factor which led to union was the political deadlock in the province of Canada, which for some time had

made efficient government impossible, and which showed no signs of abating. English speaking people saw that a union with the other colonies would enable them to outnumber the French, while the latter, for their part, were becoming so afraid of being absorbed into the United States and completely overwhelmed, that they were becoming increasingly resigned to a union with only the other British North American colonies as the better of two poor alternatives. The agreement that the union should be federal, with a central government and separate provincial governments, rather than unitary, also helped to allay the doubts and fears of French Canadians.

The Imperial Government also changed its view suddenly, in view of events in the United States, and the Duke of Newcastle, the Colonial Secretary, who had been cool to Galt's proposals for union in 1860, received Howe's resolutions with cordiality in 1862. From that time on opinion in Britain veered steadily around in favour of union. The definite and concrete proposals of the Quebec Conference in 1864 found a ready response in London, and from that time on the cause of union had steady support in the Mother Country.

Finally, perhaps the decisive factor in the achievement of Confederation was the personal contribution of a

few great Canadian statesmen, among whom must be mentioned prominently the names of Macdonald, Cartier, Galt, Tupper, and McGee, and without whose courageous and far-sighted leadership the union could not have been accomplished.

The occasion of Canada's birth as a nation was marked by no great demonstration of enthusiasm in the new Dominion. Indeed opposition to the idea remained strong in each of the provinces, particularly in the Maritimes, where in the first federal election Tupper alone of nineteen members in Nova Scotia was returned as a supporter of confederation. It seemed that Canadians had as yet acquired neither the mentality nor a sufficiently broad outlook to appreciate the possibilities of their new status. As Lower has said, "Some people are born nations, some achieve nationhood, and others have nationhood thrust upon them. Canadians seem to be among these latter." [1]

The complex of fear, the leadership of Macdonald and a few others, and the refusal of the British government to entertain any idea of dissolution of confederation, were largely responsible for the preservation of the union during the next few precarious years. A measure of

---

[1] A.R. M. Lower: "Colony to Nation", p.325.

consolidation took place, and at the same time a notable expansion of area, both of which materially aided the cause of union. The huge area belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company was acquired in 1869, and from it a fifth province, Manitoba, was carved in 1870 under the terms of the Manitoba Act, a Canadian measure later confirmed by the British parliament. Unfortunately the process was marked by a rebellion on the part of the Métis, or half-breed settlers, which more tactful action by government officials and surveyors would probably have avoided, and although the uprising petered out upon the arrival of troops under Colonel Wolseley, it left a regrettable legacy of ill-feeling. In 1871 the Pacific coast province of British Columbia was received into the union, mainly on condition that a transcontinental railway would be started within two years and completed within ten. The next step was the admission of Prince Edward Island, which had encountered insurmountable financial difficulties, in 1873, and the Canadian government now had jurisdiction over all lands in North America north of the American border with the exception of Alaska and Labrador.

In spite of powerful opposition from anti-confederation interests, and despite its weak handling of the Riel Rebellion, Macdonald's government had survived, and

had even succeeded in absorbing certain Liberal elements, and also in effecting a reconciliation with Joseph Howe. In the elections of 1872 Macdonald's coalition was returned to office, and proceeded with plans for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. However in the following year revelations of what were regarded as corrupt electioneering practices in accepting campaign funds from Sir Hugh Allan, the president of the company which was to build the railway, shocked the country severely, and the so-called "Pacific Scandal" drove Macdonald from office in November 1873.

B. The International Scene, 1867-1873

In 1867 there were perhaps six nations in Europe which could be classed as powers, of which only three, Great Britain, Russia, and France, had important commitments outside Europe. The remaining three were Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Italy, all of which were still undergoing a process of unification and formation. Prussia under the leadership of Bismarck was rapidly strengthening itself and also uniting under its control the neighboring German states. The defeat of Denmark in 1864 had added the provinces of Schleswig and Holstein,

and the surprising victory over Austria in 1866 had not only excluded that country from Germany, but had definitely established Prussia as the most potent single force in Central Europe. After 1866 German unification proceeded very rapidly, with the formation of the North German Confederation, and was completed by 1871, when the German Empire was established, with Prussia at its head.

In Austria the once-proud House of Hapsburg had fallen upon evil fortunes, and the loss of the Italian states, coupled with the defeat at Sadowa, reduced its former large possessions greatly and confined it to the Danubian area. The Emperor Francis Joseph was forced to admit that the future held no hope for his heterogeneous dominions unless equal status was granted to Hungary, and so in 1867 the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary was created, which preserved a troubled and precarious existence until 1918.

The events in Germany were paralleled by a similar unification of Italy, which after centuries of divided rule and foreign domination was at last being welded into a single state. The defeat of Austria in 1860, with the help of Napoleon III, made possible in the same year the union of a number of states including The Two Sicilies, the Papal States (except Rome), Tuscany, Lucca, Modena,

and Parma with the Kingdom of Sardinia under King Victor Emmanuel, and Italy's life as a nation was begun. In 1866 she made use of her alliance with Prussia to acquire Venetia from the Austrians, and in 1870-1871, during France's humiliation, she marched into Rome, making herself complete in a geographical sense. It is evident that without foreign assistance this might never have been accomplished, but the names of Victor Emmanuel, Mazzini, Cavour, and Garibaldi will always be prominently associated with the cause of Italian unity.

Russia, always the enigma of Europe, was undergoing fundamental internal changes, of which the most notable was the emancipation of the serfs in 1861, a great measure which unfortunately neither accomplished all that it set out to do nor took permanent effect. Already huge in area and extending from central Europe to the Pacific Ocean, Russia had not yet satisfied her expansive tendencies and longed for an outlet to the Mediterranean. The decisive defeat inflicted on her by Great Britain and France in the Crimean War (1854-1856) had forced her to transfer her attention elsewhere, and so at this time her energies were being mainly directed towards the East.

In France it was the period of Napoleon III and

the Second Empire. Under Napoleon France had participated in several victorious wars, helping Britain defeat Russia in 1854-1856 and assisting the Italians against Austria in 1860. The expedition to put Maximilian on the Mexican Throne ended in disaster, however, and was a serious blow to French prestige. Her alarm at the defeat of Austria in 1866 was justified amply by later events. France was the possessor of a considerable number of colonies, notably in North Africa and South Eastern Asia, and had already come into close and unfriendly contact with Great Britain in her most recent colonizing activities.

Great Britain's interests at this time were primarily domestic. She was especially devoted to the development of her industry and commerce, fields in which she still enjoyed undisputed world leadership, and hoped mainly to preserve peace in order that these might prosper. With her as yet unchallenged domination of the seas, by her all-powerful navy, she was able to control events abroad, and no European power could exert itself outside Europe without her passive consent. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 accentuated the importance to Britain of her Indian and other Eastern colonies, and quickened her interest in Near and Middle Eastern affairs. Britain

regarded herself as being well-removed from the entanglements and disturbances of continental Europe, and pursued her old policy of attempting to keep European powers divided into two opposing groups of equal strength, so that by applying her own power strategically she could sway events in whichever direction she might please.

Outside Europe there were two independent nations of growing strength, as yet largely unconcerned with the rest of the world, but being gradually drawn into the current of international affairs. The United States of America had just emerged from its Civil War, a tragic affair which nevertheless established that the nation should continue as one unit rather than two, in which the institution of slavery was to pass out of existence. It was primarily interested in the settlement of its western regions and the development of its industries, activities that proceeded unhampered behind the protection afforded by the Monroe Doctrine and the British navy. In the Far East the Empire of Japan had been aroused from her centuries of intellectual slumber by Commodore Perry's forced entry in 1854, and had been compelled to admit western traders and at the same time western civilization. Great Britain, long established in the Far East, particularly since the acquisition of

Singapore by Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819, followed America's example a few months later, and it was not long before other European nations did likewise. Japan made a remarkably speedy adjustment to the new developments, and from this time on ceased to oppose the entry of European ideas. Henceforth the modernization of her industries and institutions was both voluntary and extremely rapid.

The outstanding event of international significance during the years from 1867 to 1873 was the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871, in which the over-confident Emperor and army of France were disastrously defeated, and France herself given a setback which in the light of later events appears to have had permanent effect. The fall of France was due to a number of factors, over-confidence, under-estimation of the enemy, and the superior organization and leadership of the Prussians, to mention a few. Moltke and other military figures directed the campaigns, but the power behind the scenes, and the real architect of victory, was the grim figure of Otto von Bismarck.

Bismarck had become President of the Ministry in 1862, and from that time until his fall from power in

1890 he dominated German policy and was the outstanding figure in Europe. His policy was crafty and many-sided, and his methods were tortuous -- a combination of brutality trickery, and arrogance -- but there were several cardinal principles or tenets of policy from which he never wavered. After 1871 he aimed to preserve peace in Europe and particularly for Germany, so as to be able to concentrate on developing her internally, being content to let other nations pursue the colonization of distant lands. Also he desired to preserve good relations with both Great Britain and Russia, but never to allow them to become allies, to preserve Austria as a major power but never to allow her to clash with Russia in the Balkans, and above all, to isolate France.

Consequently he welcomed the formation in France of a republican form of government after her defeat in 1871, -- a government which would make her a pariah among monarchical powers, and endeavored by various underhanded and subtle methods to keep the French government weak and to prevent the nation from making progress. He was not so well pleased with the rapid recovery made by France after 1871 -- a recovery so rapid that her large war indemnity was speedily paid, and the occasion for the retention of German troops in France ended. It was

obvious that France would lose no opportunity in the future to regain her lost provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, and that this area must be regarded, along with the Balkans and the Dardanelles, as the chief danger spot in Europe.

Nevertheless Bismarck could hardly complain of the trend of events immediately following 1871. The meeting in Berlin of the rulers of Austria, Russia, and Germany in 1872 resulted in the formation of the League of the Three Emperors, or Dreikaiser Bund, in the following year, and seemed to assure that Germany would have no lack of allies, and that France would be kept in isolation. The unification of Germany, practically completed in 1871, was followed by a period of industrial and commercial development so rapid as to astound the whole world, and with the possible exception of the similar progress in Japan without a parallel in world history. Bismarck was worried, however, when Thiers fell from power in France in May 1873. Thiers had republican tendencies, and his fall seemed to pave the way for the return of France to a monarchical form of government, which would make her more eligible as an ally for other European powers.

C. Canadian External Relationships 1867-1873

Canadian Status in 1867

The British North America Act outlined the constitution under which the Dominion of Canada was to be governed, and in sections 91 and 92 enumerated the powers of federal and provincial governments. Generally speaking matters of minor and local concern were to be left to the provinces, while larger affairs of national importance were to be looked after by the federal government. Also it was specified that the Dominion government should retain the field of residuary powers, that is, control over matters not specifically assigned to one authority or the other, and that it should have the right to disallow provincial legislation. These provisions gave the Dominion government a large measure of control over its internal affairs. The self-governing powers of Canada were, however, greatly restricted by the retention of certain powers by the British Government, which reserved to itself the right to disallow Dominion measures, the control of foreign affairs, the supreme judicial authority embodied in the Privy Council, and the sole authority to amend the Canadian constitution. Certain other minor rights were retained at the same time, such as control of immigration, the governor's pardoning

power, the command of Canadian defenses by British officers, and the right to station British troops on Canadian soil. Most of these powers have since passed under Canadian control, but at the time they placed serious limitations on Canadian sovereignty. This was particularly true in the field of foreign affairs, as Canada had neither sizable armed forces nor diplomatic representation in foreign capitals, and relied upon Great Britain both to defend her and to look after her relationships with foreign nations. However great developments have since taken place in Canadian sovereignty, which are probably not yet completed, although notable progress had been made even by 1914.

The Washington Treaty

The first Canadian government after Confederation took part in diplomatic discussions which were designed to settle problems arising out of the recent Civil War. Outstanding among these from Canada's viewpoint was the question of the fisheries, which was partially settled by the Washington Treaty of 1871. Since it was the first international discussion at which Canada had representation, and since it was also one of the most important which has concerned her, the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the treaty will be briefly surveyed.

The Treaty of Paris in 1783 gave Americans the right to fish in colonial waters, but the British considered that the War of 1812 ended this arrangement. A convention in 1818 gave American citizens fishing rights in parts of the coastal waters of Newfoundland, Labrador, and the Magdalen Islands, on condition that they did not invade the three mile limit elsewhere, except in cases of emergency. By the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 both Canadian and American fishermen were given greatly extended privileges in coastal waters, but when that treaty was abandoned by the United States in 1866 the convention of 1818 once again came into operation. Between then and 1870 several arrangements were tried, all of which proved unsatisfactory, and so in the latter year the Dominion Government urged the British authorities to attempt a settlement.

After 1869 there did seem to be a better chance that a treaty could be arranged. In that year Hamilton Fish replaced Sumner as American Secretary of State, and his attitude towards the British Empire was more open to reason. An unofficial visit of Sir John Rose to Washington resulted in a possible basis for agreement being reached, the active support of the British government was secured, and a conference arranged for February 1871.

The outlook of each of the three countries towards the question was extremely individualistic, one might even say self-centred. Great Britain, worried lest she become involved in Europe and North America at the same time, wanted to achieve a satisfactory settlement with the United States, and was willing to make concessions in order to get it. Canada's prime desire was for a reciprocal trade treaty. She had little objection to granting the Americans greater freedom in the use of her fisheries, but felt that she was entitled to adequate compensation. The United States on the other hand felt little need for a treaty and could afford to be truculent. Her policy was essentially to demand as much and concede as little as possible. Besides, the desire for annexation still burned strong, and Americans hoped that if Canada were denied the benefits resulting from reciprocity she would be compelled sooner or later to join the Union for economic reasons. Undoubtedly the American position was the strongest, though hardly the most just.

The British government had decided that Canada should be represented at the conference, and after it became apparent that neither Sir John Rose nor the Governor General, Lord Lisgar, would be acceptable to

the Canadian people, the offer was made to Sir John A. Macdonald. He and his colleagues felt grave doubts as to the advisability of attending, since if he could agree with neither the British nor the American delegations, which appeared only too likely, he might be publicly charged with the blame in case the conference should break up in disagreement. On the other hand, if a treaty should be achieved, it would probably be one which he would have little voice in framing, yet his countrymen might hold him responsible for any deficiencies. His position was both delicate and difficult, yet he felt that he should go, because he could hardly justify to the Canadian people a refusal to participate in discussions where such vital Canadian interests were at stake.

The Americans were at a loss to understand the legal position of the British delegation, particularly with reference to the Canadian representative. Canada had no power to negotiate a treaty, and so the presence of a Canadian on the commission seemed to them to be superfluous. Great Britain however announced, to their surprise, that any fishing treaty would have to be ratified by the Canadian Parliament. As Glazebrook says, "It was the beginning of the long story of foreign uncertainty

on the constitution of the empire"[1] At the same time it marked a new stage in Canada's progress towards complete self-government.

At the conference, which began on February 27, 1871, Macdonald's worst fears were realized, and he found himself in constant conflict with both the American and the British representatives. The British continually urged him to make concessions to the Americans which he felt that he could not grant and should not be asked to make, while the demands of the Americans appeared to him to be completely one-sided and selfish. By the middle of April negotiations appeared to have reached a hopeless deadlock, and Macdonald was tempted to resign. Prospects of a better deal for Canada appeared when Britain offered to assume financial responsibility for the Fenian damages which she was claiming from the United States, and on this basis an agreement was reached. Macdonald still heartily disapproved of the whole settlement, and when he finally signed, it was not as the representative of Canada, but as an Imperial commissioner, and after having expressed his objections in a letter to Lord Granville,

---

[1] G.P. deT. Glazebrook: "Canadian External Relations to 1914", p.131

the Colonial Secretary.

The main terms of the Treaty of Washington were briefly as follows:

1. The Americans were to be admitted to the Canadian fisheries for a ten year period, and Canadians to the American fisheries north of the 39th degree of north latitude.
2. Both countries were to have free navigation of the St. Lawrence River system, including Lake Michigan, and also of the rivers of Alaska.
3. There were to be mutual bonding privileges for twelve years, and limited reciprocity in the carrying trade of the Great Lakes.
4. The only free trade was to be in fish and fish oil. This clause was probably the greatest disappointment to the Canadian people.
5. The Fenian claims, on American insistence, were left out, and the other major questions -- the Alabama claims, the San Juan boundary dispute, and Canada's claim regarding the fisheries, that she had conceded more than she had been granted, were all to be settled by neutral arbitration.

The Treaty of Washington was finally signed on May 8, 1871.

The San Juan Dispute

The dispute over the possession of San Juan Island was referred to the German emperor, who in 1872 upheld the American claim to the fullest extent. He decided that the island of San Juan should be exclusively American property, and that the boundary line should follow the westernmost of the two channels in dispute, in other words, the one nearest to Vancouver Island, Canal de Haro. The decision caused some bitterness in Canada, as at that time, and during the years previous, the eastern channel, Rosario Strait, was the one most used, and seemed the most natural for a boundary line. However the matter was not looked upon as very vital, and was soon forgotten.

Other Aspects of Canada's External Relationships 1867-1873

Except for the Washington Conference Canada's external relations between 1867 and 1873 were of little significance. Contacts with other nations were few and of a minor nature. There was a little trade with some foreign countries such as France, but by far the greater bulk of trade was with Great Britain and the United States. Canada had no diplomatic representation abroad, and Britain looked after her foreign relationships, which,

except for those concerning the United States, were unimportant. Nevertheless there are certain aspects of Canadian relations with the United States and Great Britain during these years which are worthy of mention.

Regarding the United States, the Riel Rebellion in Manitoba created a tense situation in that area, as many Americans were known to be working for the annexation of the Red River region to the United States. A raid of Fenians into Manitoba actually took place in 1871, and although it was promptly repulsed, it was a cause of concern to the Canadian government. The American fringe of settlement was perilously close to Manitoba, and since the United States had rail service to the West, she was in far closer contact with the Red River settlement than Eastern Canada was. However the acquisition of the Hudson's Bay Company's territories did much to dampen American efforts towards annexation, and after the formation of the province of Manitoba the excitement gradually died down. A noticeable improvement in Canadian-American relations followed. The most important boundary disputes had been settled, and those arising out of the American purchase of Alaska in 1867 did not become acute until later. The Washington Treaty had contributed something to the settlement of the

fisheries dispute, and the bitterness engendered by the late Civil War was receding into the past. Consequently the over-all picture of Canadian-American relations was considerably brighter and more amicable in 1873 than in 1867.

With reference to Imperial relationships, it seemed to become established during these years that Canada would continue as a unit of the British Empire. This had been by no means certain during the twenty years immediately preceding Confederation, as a period of keen American desire for annexation had coincided with the nadir of British desire to retain her overseas possessions or to assume colonial responsibilities. In view of the foregoing it is obvious that the reason that Canada did not become a part of the United States was mainly because of an overwhelming desire on the part of the majority of her people to preserve the British connection.

In the 1860's and 1870's a re-orientation of Imperial policy took place, and colonies again came to be looked upon with favour. The British authorities felt however that a colony which had been granted self-government as Canada had been should be willing to assume increased responsibilities for its own defense,

and accordingly proposed to withdraw her troops from Canadian soil. The Canadian government protested, fearing aggression from the United States, and not feeling able as yet to provide adequate replacements. Although no agreement had been reached by 1870, the British government in that year insisted on removing all her troops except those at Halifax and Esquimalt, which were regarded as important naval bases. Canadians thought that this step was an unwarranted desertion, yet realized that in case of emergency British assistance would in all probability be available.

D. Hansard and Canadian External Relationships 1867-1873[1]

A study of Hansard for the years immediately following Confederation is not very revealing, as far as foreign relationships are concerned. The broad flow of international events was almost completely neglected in the debates, and one could read them over from beginning to end and still remain in ignorance of what was

---

[1] No copies of Hansard were printed in 1867, 1868, 1869, 1873 and 1874. The only record for these years consists of unofficial scrap-books and newspaper clippings in Ottawa.

happening in the outside world. Not only this, but even Canadian external relationships were almost completely left out of the picture. There were no debates on foreign policy, unless one regards the discussions on the Washington Treaty, after it had been signed, as such. This of course is hardly surprising, since in actuality no foreign policy existed.

Although this is true, the debates do furnish interesting sidelights on certain events of international significance. As mentioned, a debate took place on the Washington Conference, which was of a very vigorous and controversial nature and which examined the subject thoroughly.

As soon as the terms of the Treaty had been made public in May, 1871, a storm of protest was aroused in Canada. Parliament was not in session at the time, and nearly a year elapsed before discussion took place there, during the 1872 session. During the interval the Opposition, led by George Brown and his Toronto Globe, let loose a flood of abuse, representing Macdonald as a traitor to his country. Macdonald wisely remained silent, planning to show that the Opposition's attitude was the same as his own had been, and therefore they had no right to criticize him for making the best of a bad

job. When Parliament met in 1872, he gave the House a thorough review of the circumstances leading up to the signing of the Treaty, and then defended his part in it on the grounds that he had done his best under difficult circumstances. His closing words are worthy of note; "I believe the sober second thought of this country accords with the sober second thought of the Government, and we come down here and ask the people of Canada through their representatives to accept this treaty, to accept it with all its imperfections, to accept it for the sake of peace, and for the sake of the Great Empire, of which we form a part."[1]

The Opposition however continued to attack the Treaty, both in and out of the House, and it appeared for a time as if many of Macdonald's supporters might desert him. However sufficient time had elapsed for the first wave of anger and frustration to have subsided. Macdonald's strategy worked to perfection, and his generalship in the House was superb. The result was that the Treaty Bill was passed with a large majority.

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1872, p.345.

The San Juan boundary dispute on the other hand aroused little discussion, beyond two questions put to Macdonald by Sir A.T. Galt, who wanted to know if any steps had been taken to have Canada's interests represented. Macdonald replied that it was a matter over which the Imperial Government had jurisdiction. Galt said that he feared Canada's interests would be neglected, and Macdonald agreed it was possible.[1]

The Franco-Prussian War was referred to several times during the 1871 session, in a manner which indicated that Canada's sympathies, if any, were with France. Mr. Mackenzie began his remarks on the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne by saying that the administration of affairs and foreign events should be reviewed, and continued as follows, "Stupendous events have taken place since the last session, including those of a gigantic and disastrous war. It is but right that I should express my sympathies with the sacrifices and sufferings of that great nation, being the friend and ally of England. I do hope that France will not suffer much either in feeling or interest in the forthcoming

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1872, p.469.

treaty of peace."[1]

Mr. Macdonald in his reply followed the same theme: "I agree with the honorable member that we all should feel sympathy for the ancient ally of England in her troubles, but I cannot agree with the honorable member that this is the day of her greatest humiliation". There never was a time in the history of France when her future appeared brighter. She will rise renovated by her great trial to her old place, and be one of the first powers of Europe, if she ever ceased to occupy that position; and I have no doubt that England and France again and again will act in concert as the foremost nations in civilization."[2]

Both speakers, one the Opposition leader and the other the Government leader, were applauded. Later in the session Macdonald announced that the Government would provide transportation for contributions to the French people.[3] Yet Britain's relations with Germany were not noticeably less cordial than with France at this time, and it is difficult to account for the evident pro-French bias unless one assumes that both speakers

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1871, p.18.
[2] " " " " " p.22.
[3] " " " " " p.78.

were courting the favour of Canada's French population.

There were a number of references to relations with the United States, aside from those bearing on the Washington Treaty. Francis Hincks in 1870 voiced the common fear that the Americans still desired to annex Canada, and cited recent events in the Red River Settlement as evidence.[1] There were frequent references to the Fenian claims, and a lengthy discussion on the subject took place in 1872, in which Canada's claims for damages were re-affirmed. In 1870 L.S. Huntington brought forward a resolution proposing a customs union or zollverein with the United States, but it was defeated by a large majority.[2]

The loyalty of Canada and the House to Great Britain was frequently affirmed, in the Speeches from the Throne and elsewhere. There were also frequent references to the problem of defense and particularly to the removal of the Imperial troops, for example by George Ryan in 1870[3] and by Mr. Cartwright and Sir G.E. Cartier in 1871,[4] all of whom expressed regret and concern over the suddenness of the step and the dangerous

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1870, p.132.
[2] " " " " " p.449ff.
[3] " " " " " p.1533.
[4] " " " " 1871, p.819ff.

position in which it placed Canada.

With the above exceptions, the attentions of Canada's Parliaments between 1867 and 1873 were almost exclusively taken up with matters of internal and domestic importance. The achievement of Confederation, and the following consolidation and expansion, were tremendous accomplishments, especially as they were crowded into the short space of six or seven years, and demanded the fullest attention of Parliament. Other matters of strictly Canadian concern -- the Red River Rebellion and the planning of a transcontinental railway for example -- also required much consideration. Add to this the fact that Canada had no official voice in her external affairs, and it is not surprising that international affairs should have been so neglected. Canadians desired primarily to retain the British connection, to preserve friendly relations with and independence from the United States, and to manage their internal affairs in their own way, and their most noticeable attitudes to the outside world were as yet those of disregard and indifference.

CHAPTER II

THE MACKENZIE ADMINISTRATION (1873-1878)

A. Canada Under Alexander Mackenzie

The administration which succeeded that of Macdonald in November 1873 retained office until October 1878. Its leader, Alexander Mackenzie, was a man of industry and character, honest and high-principled almost to a fault, but lacking in the qualities of leadership and co-ordinating ability so eminent in Macdonald. In the end his mishandling of affairs and misjudgment of public opinion brought about his downfall.

Mackenzie began his administration under circumstances which seemed to ensure a long continuance of power. The reduced majority which supported Macdonald after the general elections of 1872 had disintegrated and dwindled away during the disastrous affair of the Pacific Scandal, and in November 1873 he resigned without even waiting for a vote. So shocking had been the effect on public opinion that in the elections of 1874 the Conservatives retained only 45 seats out of a total of 206, and it appeared that as a political party they might be ruined. Seldom has a political administration

been given a more decisive mandate from the people than that given Alexander Mackenzie in 1874.

However it was not long before the Liberals began to lose prestige. A world-wide depression overtook Canada at approximately the same time as they assumed office, and coincided with several crop failures. Although the resulting economic misfortunes could hardly be attributed to the administration, yet it received an increasing share of the blame. The Liberals had been swept into power so quickly that they had not had time to plan their course of action, and were handicapped by disagreements on policy within the party. Mackenzie lacked the personal magnetism of Macdonald, and had much difficulty in handling public relations and controlling his followers, especially the brilliant but erratic Edward Blake, who apparently entered and left the Ministry whenever he desired. Mackenzie saddled himself with the responsibilities of the Public Works Department, and devoted so much time to this position that his main duties as Prime Minister were neglected. Finally, both he and Blake seriously under-estimated the rising demand in Canada both for a transcontinental railway and for increased protection of Canadian industries. The net result was that the early popularity of the Liberal government declined rapidly.

In spite of his troubles Mackenzie could still boast of much real achievement during his term in office, which was not only efficient and economical but also entirely free from scandal. In fact these good features contributed in a very real sense to his downfall, as he relied almost solely on his record as an administrator for public favour. In 1874 a General Election law introduced voting by ballot and provided for simultaneous elections throughout the country. In 1875, under the influence of Blake, a Canadian Supreme Court and Court of Exchequer were created. It is interesting to note that the Supreme Court Bill originally contained a clause prohibiting appeals to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council unless imperial interests were directly affected. This clause had to be left out after a sharp objection had been received from London. However Blake and Mackenzie did succeed in limiting the prerogatives of the Governor General considerably, and thus made a noteworthy contribution to Canadian constitutional development. The North West Mounted Police was organized in 1874, and the Intercolonial Railway was completed and opened in 1876. Yet in spite of the significance of these and other accomplishments the success of Mackenzie's term is diminished by the lack of vigor and foresight

which characterized his handling of vital questions such as the Pacific Railway, with which so little progress was made that British Columbia threatened to withdraw from Confederation.

Macdonald was clever enough to take advantage of Mackenzie's mistakes. For two years he kept the Conservatives in the background, to let the Pacific Scandal die down and to allow his party to gather strength. He was confident that time would restore his fortunes. "Give the Grits rope enough", he said, "and they will hang themselves". When he saw that public opinion was steadily rising against the free-trade policies to which Mackenzie clung so persistently, he made tariffs the major issue of the 1878 elections, and used every device known to the politician to discredit the Government. The success of his campaign for a "National Policy" exceeded his wildest expectations, and he was returned to power by a majority hardly less remarkable than that which had rejected him in 1874.

B. The International Scene, 1873-1878

During the years of Alexander Mackenzie's administration in Canada world interest was centred mainly on the Balkans. Here Turkish misrule combined with the

ambitions of various Powers and the rising nationalism in the small Balkan states to produce one crisis after another. Turkish misdeeds increased while Turkish power declined, and, goaded to the breaking-point, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria all revolted in 1874 and 1875. The uprisings were put down with revolting cruelties and atrocities, but Serbia and Montenegro both went to war with Turkey in 1876. Although Montenegro won some successes, Serbia was badly defeated, and the anger of Russia was aroused. In 1877-1878 Russia, with the aid of Rumania and the states already engaged, inflicted a decisive defeat on the Turks, and Abdul Hamid sued for peace. A treaty was signed at San Stefano in March 1878, giving Russia large concessions both in the Balkans and the Caucasus, and creating a large and independent Bulgaria. Britain and Austria both objected strongly to the terms of the treaty, and it became obvious that Russia's gains would not be consolidated without protest.

As a result of the intervention of the Great Powers, the Congress of Berlin was held during June of 1878. England and Austria united in demanding that Russia modify the terms of San Stefano, while Bismarck was primarily concerned with preventing an open breach between Austria and Russia. The Congress finally

accepted the arrangement that Russia should give up the dominant position she had secured in the Balkans but retain her territorial gains in the Caucasus, while Britain should receive Cyprus and Austria control over Bosnia and Herzegovina. The new large Bulgaria was to be reduced to one third of its size, and Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro were all to be independent. While there was some wrangling over the terms of this settlement, most of the essential features had been arrived at previously by private negotiations between the powers.

Several other aspects surrounding this affair are worthy of mention. In England opinion regarding the Turkish question was divided into two schools, one led by Gladstone and the other by Disraeli. Gladstone was mainly concerned with Turkish oppression and misrule in the Balkans, and demanded that they be expelled "bag and baggage" from the Balkan states, - a step that would aid Russian schemes. Disraeli was more anxious to prevent Russian expansion in the Balkans, and especially to prevent her from obtaining the Straits, so was willing to overlook Turkey's misrule in order to preserve that country as a make-weight against Russia. Since he was in power at the time, and represented

Britain at Berlin, the emphasis of the British delegation was placed on checking Russia.

Bismarck was in a difficult position throughout the conference, trying to restore harmony between his two allies Austria and Russia. He endeavored to represent himself merely as an "honest broker" seeking for peace, but it was becoming increasingly evident that the day was coming when he would have to choose one ally or the other. For the present he had not had to commit himself openly, but the Russians thought, with good reason, that he favoured Austria, and were offended. The check to Russia's ambitions in the Balkans caused her to divert her attentions primarily to the Far East, where they remained until 1905.

During these years France was content to avoid major commitments in world affairs. Her republican form of government, finally adopted in January 1875 under President McMahon, did not keep her as isolated as Bismarck hoped it would, and after the war scare of 1875 it appeared that she had gained a little sympathy in the eyes of the world, and that Germany had lost a little. With the approval of Bismarck she turned her eyes abroad in search of additional colonies, particularly in Africa, but her ambitions received a rude jolt

in 1875 when Disraeli bought out the Khedive's holdings in the Suez Canal. Britain had shown little interest during the construction of this huge project, in which France had assumed the leading role, but Disraeli's bold action at one step re-established Britain's influence in Egypt and gave her control over the short route to the Far East.

C. Canada's External Relations, 1873-1878

Canada's external contacts during Mackenzie's administration were limited both in extent and in significance. However there were a number of foreign discussions and negotiations of some importance, nearly all of which concerned the United States.

Brown's Attempt to Reach a Reciprocity Agreement with the United States

A cardinal feature of the Liberal Government's policy was its steady adherence to the principle of free trade. Mackenzie's personal attitude to the question is clearly illustrated by his answer to Mr. Wallace of Norfolk in the 1875 session, who asked if it was the intention of the Government to renew negotiations during

the parliamentary recess for a reciprocity treaty with the United States. Mackenzie said in reply, "We will always be glad to negotiate for a Reciprocity Treaty with any nation."[1]

However attempts to reach a reciprocity treaty with the United States met with little success. The most notable effort was that of George Brown in 1874.

Brown, recently appointed a Senator, was sent to Washington in February 1874 as a confidential agent to ascertain whether or not the United States would look with favour on a restoration of reciprocity. He decided that there was a good chance of obtaining a treaty, and, acting on his advice, the Canadian government urged the Imperial authorities to take action, meanwhile insisting that a Canadian representative be retained on the negotiating commission. The result was that Brown was appointed joint plenipotentiary with Sir Edward Thornton, the British minister in Washington, and discussions were begun with Mr. Hamilton Fish, the American representative.

[1] Debates of the Canadian House of Commons, 1875, p.1002.

The Canadian proposals, for which Brown was chiefly responsible, were briefly as follows:

1. the free list of 1854 was to be restored and extended
2. the two countries were to retain the fishing rights and navigation rights which were provided for in the Treaty of Washington
3. the fishery arbitration provision of the Washington Treaty would be abandoned
4. there were a number of other provisions respecting enlargement of waterways, coasting trade, and joint commissions
5. the treaty was to last for twenty-one years, and thereafter was subject to three years' notice of termination by either side.

Brown seriously misjudged American opinion and over-estimated American enthusiasm for the treaty, for in spite of favorable comments both in the American press and in Congress the draft treaty which was agreed upon was quietly shelved by the Senate until the next term and then rejected. The failure of his efforts was a great personal disappointment to Brown as well as a setback for those who advocated free trade.

The most noteworthy aspect of this renewed attempt at reciprocity, aside from its revelation of

the commercial policy of the Liberal government, was in Mackenzie's insistence on Canada's right to representation in any discussion which concerned her directly. This was in decided contrast to the reluctance of Macdonald and his colleagues to accept representation on the Washington Commission in 1871, and marked a step forward in Canada's progress towards independence in foreign affairs.

The Halifax Tribunal (1877)

The rejection by the American Senate of the Brown-Fish Treaty in 1874 necessitated the settlement by arbitration of the dispute over the excess value of the fisheries, as provided for under the Treaty of Washington. After some delay the negotiating commission was organized and met in Halifax in June 1877. It consisted of a representative for Canada, Sir A.T. Galt, one for the United States, Judge E.H. Kellogg, and a neutral commissioner, Maurice Delfosse, the Belgian minister at Washington. In this arbitration Canada thus assumed a still more independent position than that at Washington in 1874, where Brown had joint membership with a British representative, as in this case Galt sat alone on the commission as sole British representative.

The outcome of the arbitration was extremely satisfactory to Canada, and to the ability and untiring effort of Galt is due much of the credit. The tribunal decided by majority decision that Canada and Newfoundland should receive together $5,500,000 as compensation for the superior value of their fisheries, of which $4,420,882 was to be Canada's share. Kellogg had disagreed with the other members over the amount, and the award aroused much dissatisfaction in the United States. The money was paid, with a bad grace, after a few months' delay, but public opinion in the United States was so opposed to the settlement that the fishery clauses of the Washington Treaty were abrogated as soon as possible, in 1885. The fishery question then reverted to the unsatisfactory pre-1871 position, with the Canadian government endeavoring to exclude American fishermen from Canadian fishing grounds.

The Dispute over Mutual Use of Waterways

The Washington treaty had provided that the American and British governments would try to persuade local authorities (i.e., the state, dominion, and provincial governments) to permit mutual use of their waterways. In 1874 the Canadian government complained

that although the Americans were being allowed the use of Canada's waterways, Canadians were not being granted similar privileges, particularly regarding the passage through the Champlain Canal to the Hudson River. The governor of New York State insisted that no legal obstacles existed, but it turned out that Canadian vessels were being compelled to discharge their cargo at the first point of entry, and were not being permitted to go any further. After long discussions between Hamilton Fish and Sir Edward Thornton, the Secretary of the Treasury was asked to use his power to specify the ports at which Canadian vessels might unload their cargoes, and in 1876 Canadian vessels were given permission to go as far as Albany, via Plattsburg, Oswego, or Buffalo.

The Lake of the Woods Boundary Settlement

The Lake of the Woods boundary disagreement was brought to a head in 1870 when a group of American engineers reported that a Hudson's Bay Company post to the north of Pembina was on American soil. The uncertainty was caused by ambiguities in previous treaties, particularly those of 1783 after the American Revolution, the Jay Treaty of 1794, and the Convention of 1818,

mainly resulting from ignorance of the geography of the regions west of the Great Lakes. It had been finally agreed in 1818 that the boundary line between the "Stony" Mountains and the Lake of the Woods should start from the most northwesterly point of the said lake and follow the 49th parallel, and if necessary a line should be drawn from this point due north or south, as the case might be, until the 49th parallel was reached. The most northwesterly point of the Lake of the Woods had been determined in 1826, but the matter had been allowed to lapse until 1870, when President Grant received the above mentioned engineer's report, and decided to ask Congress to arrange for a settlement.

After the British government had been approached a joint commission was appointed, in which Captain D.A. Cameron represented Britain and Archibald Campbell the United States. The first meeting was held at Pembina in 1871. It soon became obvious that the American contention was correct, and that if the agreement of 1818 were carried out the Hudson's Bay post in question would indeed be on American soil. Captain Cameron tried to make some arrangement so that Canada could retain the small peninsula upon which the post stood, but the American government was adamant, so he finally gave way.

The treaty was ratified in May 1876.

The whole affair was of little importance, of less actually to the United States than Canada, to whom the post had a certain value as the starting point of a road to Fort Garry. Consequently the Dominion was rather irritated at the apparent obstinacy of the United States in insisting on a full maintenance of its rights in such a small matter, but realized that on legal grounds it had no justification for complaint.

The "Canada First" Movement

The achievement of Confederation initiated in Canada during the succeeding years attempts to form a foreign policy which would be in line with her best interests. There were at least three schools of thought regarding the direction these efforts should take, one, to effect closer relationships with Great Britain and the Empire, another, to loosen the Empire connection in favour of closer ties with the United States, and a third, to try to make Canada as independent as possible of any nation, and to let her develop along lines which would be both individualistic and nationalistic. An example of the latter viewpoint is provided by the so-called "Canada First" group which flourished during the

1870's.

The Canada First movement began soon after Confederation when a group of young men met in Ottawa and vowed to try to foster the growth of a national sentiment. The movement soon came to be associated with its motto, "Canada First", from which it derived its name. At first it was non-political, but it was gradually drawn into the political arena, and under the leadership of W.A. Foster succeeded in electing Thomas Moss to the Dominion parliament. It gained great prestige from the fact that it included among its members Edward Blake, who had retired from the Mackenzie government in 1874, and Goldwin Smith. Blake's "Aurora Speech", delivered in that town in October 1874, is still famous.

The "Canada First" group was intensely nationalistic, and, emphasizing the country's possibilities, stressed the need for Canadian development, Canadian unity, and a distinctly Canadian character, rather than one merely inherited or copied from other lands. They demanded a retention of the British connection, consolidation of the Empire, a larger voice in external affairs, the encouragment of immigration, protection of native industry, and an improved militia, commanded by Canadian officers.

The movement had wide appeal at first, and proved to be a thorn in the side of the Mackenzie government, which had little sympathy with some of its objectives. John A. Macdonald drew freely on "Canada First" proposals to form the National Policy which defeated the Liberals in 1878, but the movement itself had lost its influence as a political organization by that time. Its early demise was caused by a variety of factors -- internal dissension, lack of definite plans for action, opposition of the Government, and the defection of Blake in 1875. Many of the ideals for which the movement stood have however survived to the present day, and have become accepted facts or policies in the Canadian way of life. Both major political parties have borrowed freely of its ideas, and W. Stewart Wallace goes so far as to say that "the political history of Canada since 1874 has been essentially the story of how the two traditional parties of the Dominion have raided the platform of "Canada First" for most of their ideas."[1]

---

[1] "W.Stewart Wallace in "Cambridge History of the British Empire", volume Vi, p.488.

Hansard and Canadian External Relationships, 1873-1878

As was the case in the preceding period, the debates of the Canadian House of Commons during Mackenzie's administration do not throw a great deal of light on Canadian external relations. There were no major debates on foreign affairs, and the situation in Europe and the world at large appears to have been of minor concern to Canada's members of parliament. What discussion there was dealt mostly with Canada's trade and boundary negotiations with the United States, but even in this field there was no event of equal importance to the Washington Treaty to attract the attention of parliament. Consequently during this period there is a dearth of material which would reveal clearly Canada's views on foreign affairs. However interesting sidelights on Canadian public opinion may sometimes be obtained by observing scattered remarks of members, and on occasion also questions were asked or motions introduced which indicate that Parliament's interest in foreign affairs was not entirely absent.

The Washington Treaty had been in operation for over two years when Mackenzie came to power, but members still referred to it in a manner which indicated that it was still a matter of current interest and that its pro-

visions were a cause of controversy with the United States. In 1875, for example, Amor de Cosmos of Victoria, B.C., moved "an Address to His Excellency the Governor General for a copy of all correspondence between the Dominion Government and that of the United States,... ... respecting the right of entering fish-oils and fish of British Columbia, duty free, in the United States, under the twenty-first article of the Treaty of Washington."[1] In the following year he renewed his request for the correspondence, and complained that the United States was denying British Columbia the benefits of the treaty. He said in part, "They (the United States authorities) maintain that British Columbia, not having been a part of the Dominion at the date of the negotiation of this Treaty, cannot be admitted to the enjoyment of its benefits. I believe that this position is unreasonable."[2] Blake in reply promised to bring down the correspondence, but remarked that he feared it would not be very satisfactory. In the same session Jones of Halifax complained of an alleged violation of

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1875, p.706.
[2] " " " " , 1876, p.215.

the Treaty by the United States in placing duty on packages of Canadian fish. Mackenzie in reply remarked that "it seemed to be all but impossible to procure an enlightened carrying out of the Treaty of Washington by the Americans",[1] and also voiced the complaint mentioned earlier in this chapter that whereas American vessels were receiving free use of Canadian waterways, Canadian vessels were being denied the same privilege in the United States.[2]

In the session of 1875 Mills of Northumberland introduced a motion asking for correspondence regarding compensation to be paid by the United States to Canada for the right of fishing in Canadian waters. A lengthy discussion took place in which the entire background of the Washington Treaty was reviewed, but at the end Mackenzie persuaded Mills to withdraw his motion, saying that the Government was not prepared to take any action in the matter as yet.[3]

The question of reciprocity with the United States was raised in the House again on several occasions. In 1875 a Mr. Plumb asked for correspondence regarding

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1876, p.1032-1033.
[2] See page 45.
[3] Debates, House of Commons, 1875, pp.209 ff.,462 ff

reciprocity to be laid before the House, and in a lengthy speech gave reasons for opposing a renewal of reciprocity.[1] Government supporters endeavored to refute Plumb's arguments, and the discussion ended on an inconclusive note. In 1878 two members inquired if the Government intended to try to renew reciprocity with the United States, and to both Mackenzie replied that while no treaty was in process of negotiation at the time, the Government would give due consideration to any proposition from the other side of the border.[2]

The entry of British Columbia into Confederation, and the extension of Canada to the Pacific, naturally caused Canadians, particularly British Columbians, to consider the possibilities of establishing trade relations with other nations in the Pacific area. Some indication of this was given in the House in 1875, when de Cosmos moved that "in view of extending the commerce of the Dominion on the Pacific, it is desirable that the Government take into consideration the advisableness of securing a commercial treaty between Canada and the Hawaiian Kingdom, similar to the treaty negotiated

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1875, pp.606ff.,835ff.
[2] " " " " , 1878, pp.352-353.

between that Kingdom and the United States."[1] His later remarks express, odd as it may seem today, a desire to prevent the United States from acquiring the Hawaiian Islands. "The object of the United States is simply to acquire possession of the Sandwich Islands. From a national standpoint it would be most unfavourable to the interests of Great Britain that what might be called the half-way house between British Columbia and the Australasian Colonies and China should fall into the hands of the United States, as in all probability it would, unless the Dominion Government saw that it was to their interest that it should be maintained as an independent country."[2] Mackenzie in reply expressed approval of the motion, but was doubtful whether the Government could do much in the matter.

In 1876 the Hon. Mr. Mitchell enquired whether any steps had been taken by the Government to open up trade with the British and Foreign West Indies and South America, and whether any person had been appointed in connection with that service.[3] Mackenzie replied that

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1875, p.842.
[2] " " " " " p.843.
[3] " " " " , 1876, p.152.

the Government was trying to establish trade with the West Indies, but had as yet appointed no one on behalf of the Government.[1] The general feeling as revealed in this and a later discussion appeared to be that the institution of efficient steamer service and a lowering of duties would do much to stimulate trade with the West Indies. In 1878 a similar inquiry was made by Young of South Waterloo constituency respecting trade with the Australian colonies.[2]

The question of the British Columbia - Alaska boundary line was brought up several times, and requests were made to have it accurately determined. In 1875 Roscoe moved "an address to His Excellency the Governor General praying him to call the attention of Her Majesty's Government to the necessity of having the boundary line between British Columbia and Alaska as soon as possible defined and surveyed".[3] In his speech he outlined the situation in Alaska and told of troubles which were already arising there because of the uncertainty which existed. Other members expressed a desire to have the question settled, and de Cosmos even advocated

---

1 Debates, House of Commons, 1876, pp.152-3.
2 " " " " , 1878, p.389.
3 " " " " 1875, pp.199ff.

the purchase of the Alaskan Panhandle, a suggestion which Mackenzie said could not seriously be proposed in the House. The question was brought up again in each of the remaining sessions, and in 1877 Mackenzie was able to say that correspondence had passed between the governments concerned, but it was not in the public interest that it should be brought down at that time.[1] In 1878 he described the efforts that had been made to have the true boundary line according to the Russian Convention of 1825 determined by exploratory survey, but so far without success.[2]

The problem of immigration was referred to spasmodically, and all members appeared to agree that one of Canada's greatest needs was that of increased population. De Cosmos in 1875 asked whether the Government had taken any steps to provide European or Canadian immigrants for British Columbia, particularly to assist in the building of the western division of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and indicated that an increase of Chinese immigrants would be objectionable to the white settlers in that province.[3] Mackenzie replied "The Government have not

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1877, p.44.
[2] " " " " 1878, p.419.
[3] " " " " 1875, p.397.

taken any special means to introduce any class of immigrants into that country."[1]

An interesting discussion took place in the House in 1875 respecting international arbitration, and several members gave detailed expositions of their views.[2] Malcolm Cameron moved that Her Majesty "will be graciously pleased to cause her principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to enter into negotiation with foreign powers with a view to further improvement in international law, and the establishment of a general and permanent system of International Arbitration."[3] In a lengthy and eloquent speech he expressed his conviction that warfare was both evil and unnecessary, and called for the establishment of some system which would enable disputes to be settled peacably. Other members expressed general agreement with his principles, although Mr. Brouse maintained that certain exceptions must be made, and that at times "peace at any price" is as objectionable as war itself.[4] Plumb took the view that Canada's foreign affairs were the responsibility of Great Britain, and that therefore

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1875, p.397.
[2] " " " " 1875, pp.843-858.
[3] " " " " 1875, p.843.
[4] " " " " 1875, p.853.

the House was out of order in discussing the question.[1] Both he and Mackenzie stressed that no Canadian motion in favour of arbitration would have much practical effect on the major powers, and in response to Mackenzie's request the motion was withdrawn. The discussion was significant however, in that it provided one of the few occasions when the general problem of foreign affairs was discussed in the House, and revealed the concern, which was already apparent in Canada, over the spectacle of European nations arming to the teeth. It is obvious that Canada's representatives were already wondering what Canada's part in a major European conflict would be.

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1875, pp.856-857.

CHAPTER III

THE LAST DAYS OF MACDONALD, 1878-1891

A. Canadian Affairs 1878-1891

The history of this period is to a large extent the biography of Sir John A. Macdonald, who dominated affairs from his return to power in 1878 until his death in 1891 perhaps more completely than any Canadian prime minister before or since. Admittedly he did little to raise the moral standards of Canadian politics and the last years of his government were featured by increasing corruption, but considering the thirteen years as a whole it is evident that he accomplished a great deal.

Macdonald and his followers were fortunate that their return to power coincided in point of time with a striking revival of the country's economic fortunes. Although the return to prosperity could not properly be accredited to them, yet they naturally reaped the political benefit, and the wisdom of Macdonald's "National Policy" seemed to be confirmed. Actually the recovery was world-wide, and as far as Canada was concerned was aided materially by a number of other factors

such as a series of good crops, an expanding grain market due to several crop failures in Great Britain, and a rapid development of the West.

Macdonald was sustained in four elections during these years, the last being held shortly before his death in 1891. The first, which returned him to power, gave him a majority of 86 in a House of 206, and wide margins in nearly all the provinces, including Quebec. In the elections of 1882 the Conservatives had not only the advantage of renewed prosperity but also the prestige given by the much-publicized "National Policy" and the recently accomplished Canadian Pacific Railway agreement, so again won handily. The outcome of the 1887 elections was more doubtful, owing mainly to a return of depression and to religious dissension arising from the execution of Louis Riel, but the Liberals were badly disorganized and Macdonald's personal prestige was great enough to carry the Conservatives through to another victory, though with a reduced majority. The last election, in 1891, was fought mainly on the issue of reciprocity, which Macdonald did not oppose until the Liberals made a somewhat disunited stand in favour of it. Opportunist as usual, he fell back on his old stand-by, the "National Policy", and trumped-up charges

of disloyalty on the part of the opposition. With the aid of several telling catch-phrases such as "A British subject I was born, a British subject I will die" and "The old man, the old flag, and the old policy" he was able to rally enough support to win his last victory. Macdonald himself did not long survive the elections, which had taxed his strength severely, and died several months later.

Macdonald is associated prominently with four great achievements, any one of which would be sufficient to assure him of lasting fame. More than any other person he was responsible for Confederation, although it must be admitted that he was one of the last to accept the idea. He took the initiative in securing the transfer of the Hudsons' Bay Company Territories and in the formation of the Province of Manitoba, yet was guilty of permitting unnecessary delays and blunders which contributed to the outbreak of two rebellions. The Canadian Pacific Railway is a monument to his vision and persistent courage, but even this great accomplishment was marred by a scandal which forced him to resign in disgrace. Finally, he launched the "National Policy", which has been a cornerstone of Canadian policy ever since, but the concept of this doctrine did not originate

with him and its true economic value has been questioned by many capable thinkers, although no one denies that it has at least contributed towards the development of a distinctly Canadian nationalism. It is evident that even Sir John's greatest achievements have their darker side.

During Macdonald's last years a decline in the ascendancy of the Conservative party set in, clearly indicated by decreasing majorities in the House of Commons. Some of the factors causing this situation would have been difficult for anyone to control -- the depression which again overtook Canada during the 1880's, the refusal of the United States to consider reciprocity, which both parties would have been willing to accept by 1890, the widespread emigration to the greener pastures south of the border, and the ever-present racial and religious problem, which grew steadily more acute as the years went by. In other cases the blame could be attached either to Macdonald's own lust for power or to the increasing lethargy and lack of principle among his followers. The North West Rebellion could perhaps have been avoided by the use of a little more tact, but once it had occurred, and the Riel affair had to be settled, Macdonald found himself on the horns of a dilemma offering

no solution which could possibly satisfy all groups. He decided to sacrifice Riel, and Quebec never forgave him. Liberal charges of laxity and corruption in various departments of government appear to have been well-founded, and one minister, Sir Hector Langevin, was so clearly guilty of negligence that he finally had to resign. Macdonald himself appeared to be willing to sacrifice moral principles for political advantage, and at least two of his measures, the Redistribution of Seats Bill of 1882 and the Dominion Franchise Law of 1885, revealed a consuming desire to perpetuate his term in office whether by fair means or foul. As a result a noticeable decrease in Conservative power began during Macdonald's last years, which heralded the more rapid decline after his death.

B. The International Scene, 1878-1891

In Europe between 1878 and 1891 the Bismarckian system prevailed. It consisted of an increasingly tangled network of treaties and alliances designed to preserve German security, but there were clear indications, even before the fall of Bismarck, that this ideal was not to be attained. The Dreikaiser Bund, originally formed in 1873 in an attempt to preserve good relations

with Austria and Russia and to prevent these two countries from fighting each other, was defined by treaty at Berlin in 1881, and renewed in 1884, but allowed to lapse in 1887. A defensive alliance with Austria was formally initiated in 1879 and renewed at subsequent intervals until 1914. This Dual Alliance was expanded into the famous Triple Alliance in 1882 when Italy was included, her entry being largely the result of the French annexation of Tunis in 1881, which Bismarck had craftily encouraged. Italy voluntarily renewed the Triple Alliance in 1887, and it was again renewed in the spring of 1891. Rumania was attached to the Triple Alliance, and Bismarck made repeated efforts to secure the active support of Great Britain, though without conspicuous success. When it became obvious that the Dreikaiser Bund was a thing of the past, Bismarck was able to substitute for it a dual arrangement between Germany and Russia, the much-discussed Re-insurance Treaty of 1887, with a secret clause, contrary to Austria's interests, which was not made public until 1893.

In spite of his many alliances it was obvious by 1888 that the Bismarckian system was collapsing, and that German security was as remote as ever. In 1885 a

sudden uprising in Eastern Rumelia resulted in the union of "the two Bulgarias" -- Eastern Rumelia and Bulgaria proper -- under Prince Alexander of Battenberg. Serbia, already in high dudgeon over the disregard of her claims at the Congress of Berlin, promptly attacked the new state and was disastrously defeated at Slivnitza. Alexander was kidnapped and forced to abdicate, and Bulgaria after 1887 was ruled by the strongly anti-Russian Prince Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg. Russia had been opposed to the Bulgarian union, which Austria, Italy and Britain had accepted, and had counted on Bismarck's support to help prevent it. This support had not been given, and Russia, already irritated by Bismarck's betrayal of her interests at the Congress of Berlin, became still further alienated, and concluded that the Re-insurance Treaty of 1887 was worthless, as on all occasions German support was given to Austria rather than to Russia. Thus the Bulgarian crisis in 1885 really ended the Dreikaiser Bund, and it became necessary for Russia to look elsewhere for allies, especially after the terms of the German-Austrian Treaty of 1879 had been made public by Bismarck in 1888.

It was impossible at that time for a close understanding between Britain and Russia to be seriously considered, and so France was approached as the only possible prospect for a friendly agreement. Great Britain and Russia had nearly come to blows in Afghanistan in 1885, and their interests appeared to clash over every issue. France, now a confirmed republic, like Russia was seeking to overcome her isolation and feared aggression either from Germany or from the entire Triple Alliance. As a result the two began to draw together, and a large loan was floated in Paris to aid in the construction of the proposed trans-Siberian railway. What Bismarck would have done in the face of this new development is doubtful, but it may be safely assumed that he would have found some means to help counteract or circumvent it. But William II had ascended the German throne in 1888, and in the face of his rash and ill-advised desire to handle German affairs himself there was no course open to Bismarck other than to resign. He was succeeded by inferior advisers, and a first consequence was that no attempt was made to renew the Re-Insurance Treaty with Russia, which lapsed after 1890.

In the 1880's the mad scramble for overseas colonies began in earnest, and by 1891 practically all unclaimed lands had been occupied by one or the other of the major European powers. France seized Tunis in 1881, Madagascar in 1884, and a large part of Indo China between 1882 and 1885. Great Britain occupied Egypt, in spite of stiff opposition from France, and Belgium between 1878 and 1884 established herself in the Congo territory. Russia, forced to divert her attention from Afghanistan and India, turned her attention towards both Turkestan and China, while Germany, under the direction of Bismarck, abandoned her policy of avoiding commitments outside Europe to seize important territories at widely scattered points across the globe, including South West Africa, Tanganyika, Togoland, the Cameroons, New Guinea, and Samoa. An important acquisition was made in 1890, about the time of Bismarck's fall, when Germany acquired the island of Heligoland from Great Britain, giving in return the island of Zanzibar and certain other concessions.

These colonial acquisitions were made without serious conflicts between the Powers, but it was obvious that if any nation attempted to expand any further it would only be at the expense of some other nation, and

the dangers of conflict were thus increased.

C. Canadian External Relationships, 1878-1891

The Fisheries

The fisheries question suddenly came to the foreground again when the United States in 1885 terminated the fisheries clauses of the Washington Treaty. The American action was caused partly because of dissatisfaction with the treaty of 1871 and the financial award to Canada in 1877, and partly because of the fact that the mackerel in the Atlantic Ocean had abandoned their former northern habitat in favour of a new one in American waters. A number of unpleasant incidents, notably an attack by Newfoundlanders in 1878 on American fishermen in Fortune Bay, had heightened American displeasure.

After 1885 the situation reverted to that prevailing after 1818, with the Canadian government endeavouring to protect its fisheries from incursions by Americans, and with retaliatory measures being enacted by both sides. The United States charged that Canada was attempting to force her into a renewal of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854, and Canada in turn revived the old cry of annexation.

Fortunately there was willingness on both sides to attempt a settlement of the matter, although the United States showed a certain reluctance to deal directly with Canada because of her incomplete sovereignty. However after an unofficial visit of Charles Tupper to Washington at the invitation of Secretary of State Bayard, a conference was proposed, and the co-operation of the British government secured. The conference met in Washington in 1887-1888, with Tupper, Joseph Chamberlain, and Sir Lionel Sackville West as British Empire delegates, and Bayard, W.L. Putnam, and James B. Angell as representatives of the United States. Tupper's attempts to secure a reciprocity treaty failed, and the main outcome of the conference, the Chamberlain-Bayard Treaty of 1888, was not ratified by the American Senate, so did not come into operation. The Canadian government in a spirit of conciliation agreed to a "modus vivendi" which gave American fishermen who purchased licenses most of the privileges they desired, and which, although originally intended to last for only two years, continued in effect until 1924. Tupper was bitterly disappointed at the failure of his reciprocity negotiations, but the conference had some practical benefit as Canadian-American relations in regard to the

fisheries were greatly improved between 1888 and 1905.

The Irish Question

Regarding the delicate question of Irish self-government Canadian public opinion was divided. Undoubtedly there was a very general sympathy with the misfortunes of the Irish people, and Liberals throughout Canada, particularly French-Canadian Liberals, followed the lead of that party in England in supporting the cause of Irish Home Rule. Many others however, and especially Conservatives, were strong Unionists, their opposition to the idea of granting Home Rule to Ireland coming not so much from any desire to hold the Irish down as from the fear of papal influence in that country. Macdonald himself was a strong Unionist, and as such regarded Gladstone's policy as dangerous to the Empire. At the same time he had much sympathy for Ireland's unhappy state, and it is evident from Pope's comments that he spent a great deal of time reflecting on the Irish problem. He believed that a system of local self-government might be suitable for the Irish, but regarded complete Home Rule as out of the question owing to the bitter enmity of the Irish towards all things English. Accordingly he was instrumental in

toning down several resolutions proposed in the Canadian House of Commons, which in their original form rather pointedly advised the British government to give the Irish the privilege of governing themselves.[1]

The Development of the Idea of Imperial Federation

During the 1840's, 1850's, and 1860's there had been in Great Britain a tendency to regard colonies with increasing disfavour, and in some quarters there had grown up a demand, if not to sever all connections with them, at least to leave them to take care of themselves. Peel, Bright, and Cobden were the apostles of this idea, which was closely associated with the new theories of the advantages of free trade over protection, and the abandonment of mercantilistic principles. In the late 1860's, however, a theory of Empire unity began to grow, to which Disraeli soon became a convert, and of which Joseph Chamberlain later became a leading exponent. Other prominent figures in this new movement were Rudyard Kipling, who became the poet of imperialism, and the empire-builder, Cecil Rhodes.

Once this tendency had begun, Great Britain took

---

[1] See Sir J. Pope: "Memoirs of Sir John A. Macdonald", ch.25.

the lead in promoting closer Empire relationships, and in 1884 the Imperial Federation League was organized in London, with W.E. Forster, former Under Secretary for the Colonies, as chairman. The league had as its object the federation of the Empire, but though plans were worked out for a single parliament at Westminster, the members refused to commit themselves to any definite plan, for fear of alienating those who would find such a close union unacceptable.

A subsidiary Imperial Federation League of Canada was founded in 1885, with Montreal as headquarters and branches at Ingersoll, Peterborough, Toronto, and Halifax. Colonel G.T. Denison, John Beverley Robinson, and William Hamilton Merritt were some of the leading spirits in the organization of the Canadian branch of the league.

Opinion in Canada was fairly well divided on the issue. The Manitoba Free Press, for example, ridiculed the federation proposals,[1] while the Evening Mail of Halifax favoured a commercial union with Empire countries as preferable to one with the United States.[2] Both

---

[1] G.P. deT. Glazebrook:"Canadian External Relations to 1914," p.187

[2] Ibid. p.188.

political parties loudly proclaimed loyalty to the Empire in the elections of 1891, but the Conservative protestations made the more favourable impression after it had been established that several prominent Liberals were associated with a movement for unlimited reciprocity with the United States, and this factor contributed materially to the Conservative victory. Macdonald himself unreservedly favoured any policy which would bring about closer and more harmonious relations within the Empire, but looked on the idea of a single Parliament at Westminster as both dangerous and foolish.

Macdonald's Defense Policy and His Attitude Towards Imperial Commitments

The question of defense from the colonies' standpoint had two main aspects, first, responsibility for local defense, and second, participation in the defense of part or all of the Empire. Canada during the years following Confederation gradually assumed more responsibility for local defense, but under Macdonald generally refused to accept obligations outside of Canada. Great Britain consistently advocated full co-operation among Empire countries in Empire defense, and several of the colonies gave her a certain amount of moral and material support. In 1884 New South Wales offered a contingent

to help in the relief of General Gordon at Khartoum, and Cape Colony and several of the Australian colonies began to make small contributions to Empire naval defense. Macdonald however emphatically refused to help in the relief of Khartoum, saying "The Suez Canal is nothing to us ... our men and money would therefore be sacrificed to get Gladstone and Co. out of the hole they have plunged themselves into by their own imbecility."[1] At the same time his representative at the first Colonial Conference in 1887 refused to make direct contributions to naval defense, maintaining that in the construction of the Intercolonial and Canadian Pacific Railways Canada had made a far more costly and at the same time a far more worthy contribution to Empire defense than by granting paltry sums to the Imperial navy. MacKay and Rogers sum up Macdonald's defense policy in the following manner: "The Macdonald policy was indeed that of a self-governing colony, similar to the policies of the American colonies in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. On the whole, the policy appears to have been generally acceptable in Canada, except to ultra-imperialists.

---

[1] Quoted in MacKay and Rogers:"Canada Looks Abroad", p.73.

But it was not seriously challenged, largely because during the Macdonald era the Empire was a safe and expanding empire without serious rivals."[1]

Hansard and Canadian External Relationships, 1878-1891

If one may judge from the debates in the House of Commons, Canadian interest in world affairs showed signs of expanding during Macdonald's last years. It is probably not true to say that this interest was much in evidence except in relation to events which directly affected Canada, but at the same time there were significant signs that Canadians were beginning to feel themselves as being part of a world community, and not merely confined to North America alone. A brief summary of the relevant features in Hansard may help to make this clear.

Lengthy discussions took place in nearly every session on the immigration question, particularly regarding Chinese immigration into British Columbia, which was assuming such proportions that it threatened to outnumber

[1] MacKay and Rogers:"Canada Looks Abroad", p.73.

the white population in that province. British Columbia representatives desired to restrict Chinese immigration on the grounds that white labor was being underbid, although others, mostly members from Eastern Canada, took the view that Chinese labor was necessary to complete the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway and even that it would be desirable in Eastern Canada, where man-power for industrial and agricultural purposes was scarce. All agreed that it would be inadvisable to permit large numbers of Chinese to settle permanently in Canada, in view of the impossibility of assimilating them with our population, and in 1885 a bill was passed to restrict and regulate Chinese immigration.

Inquiries were made about Irish[1] and Jewish[2] immigration in 1883, and in the same year the prospects of encouraging immigration from Germany were discussed.[3]

Canadian concern over the continued exodus of people to the United States was amply revealed by the frequent questions and suggestions made in the House. In 1890 John Charlton, Liberal member for North Norfolk,

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1883, p.547.
[2] " " " " ", p.659.
[3] " " " " ", p. 96.

introduced a motion asking for a committee to enquire about the extent of Canadian emigration to the United States, its chief causes, and the best means of preventing it. A lengthy and interesting discussion followed. Both parties admitted the seriousness of the problem and professed a desire to overcome it, but the Government forces voted the original motion down on the grounds that it was designed primarily to discredit the National Policy.[1]

The Irish question received a considerable amount of attention in the House, and in 1880 a sum of $100,000 was voted for Irish relief.[2] On May 6 a debate occurred which kept the House in session until after 4 o'clock in the morning. A great variety of opinions was expressed in the course of framing a resolution of advice to the British Government as to how to handle the Irish question, with Macdonald leading the forces opposed to Home Rule and Blake those in favour of it. The debate proved little except that there was a violent difference of opinion in Canada over the Home Rule issue.[3]

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1890, pp.403-447.
[2] " " " " 1880, pp.126ff.
[3] " " " " 1886, pp.1096-1143.

An increasing amount of attention was paid to the development of Canada's external trade, in some cases with countries which up to that time had not exchanged any quantity of goods with us. In 1881 a trade consul was appointed in Rio Janeiro, to awaken a desire to exchange goods with Canada, and arrangements were made for an interchange of products for display and advertising purposes.[1] In 1882 a motion was introduced requesting the Imperial government to take steps to secure a reciprocity arrangement with the Hawaiian Islands, but was withdrawn when Macdonald assured the House that the Government was already endeavoring to secure such an agreement.[2] In 1883 Mr. Fortin of Gaspé, in a speech bristling with figures and statistics, detailed the situation respecting Canadian trade with the West Indies, Mexico, and Brazil, and asked that the Government make any arrangement possible to increase trade with those countries. He was assured by Sir Leonard Tilley that "any arrangement which the Government will feel justified in making ... we shall have great pleasure in submitting, and asking Parliament to

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1881, p.1328.
[2] " " " " 1882, p.1249.

sanction."[1] In 1885 a motion asking for copies of correspondence relating to the establishment of trade between Canada and the Australian colonies was accepted,[2] and in 1887 another motion urging attempts to increase trade between Canada and France also received the assent of the House.[3] Considerable discussion took place at various times regarding Canada's inferior position in the negotiation of commercial agreements, and a motion in 1889 by the Liberal Sir Richard Cartwright asking that the British government be requested to grant Canada the right to negotiate her own commercial treaties, though negatived on a party division, received much favorable comment.[4] One can at least conclude that although the Conservative government was committed to the support of its National Policy, it as well as the Opposition realized the desirability of taking any possible steps to further Canadian trade.

The old question of reciprocity with the United States was brought up at frequent intervals, but because of the ascendancy of the National Policy got no further than the discussion stage. In 1888 Sir Richard

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1883, p.774.
[2] " " " " 1885, p.36.
[3] " " " " 1887, p.823.
[4] " " " " 1889, p.194.

Cartwright introduced a motion calling for "full and unrestricted reciprocity of trade"[1] with the United States, but after a debate of interminable length extending over many days the motion was defeated.

Another matter which continually cropped up was the British Columbia-Alaska boundary line, which had not been clearly defined and which members realized might be the cause of difficulty when the time for accurate delimitation came. British Columbia members in particular were worried lest the interests of their province should be neglected when the final settlement should be made, and occasionally reminded the Government that the matter should be looked after with as much attention as possible. In 1879 Amor DeCosmos asked for copies of a large number of documents dealing with the matter, and the Government agreed that they should be brought down.[2] In 1885 David Gordon of Vancouver Island moved for copies of all correspondence dealing with the appointment of a joint commission with the United States government to survey the boundary line, and Joshua Homer of New Westminster, in seconding the motion, stressed the danger of some event such as the discovery of

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1888, p.144.
[2] " " " " 1879, p.232.

valuable minerals creating a situation which would be difficult to handle peaceably under the existing circumstances. The request for the correspondence was granted, but Minister of Public Works Sir Hector Langevin, in replying to the motion, said that although he realized that a survey would eventually have to be made the absolute need had not yet appeared, and other matters appeared to be more urgent. David Mills of Bothwell commented that a survey would cost between three and four million dollars.[1] In 1889 Edgar Dewdney, Minister of the Interior at that time, was able to say that negotiations were in progress to arrange for a survey to be made,[2] but in the following year was forced to admit that in spite of efforts on the part of the Canadian government to get the survey started, the American government had not yet shown a disposition to cooperate. He remarked blithely however that he expected little difficulty in settling the boundary line.[3]

The fisheries question was frequently brought up in the House after the United States had denounced the fisheries clauses of the Washington Treaty in 1885.

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1885, p.705-6.
[2] " " " " 1889, p.426.
[3] " " " " 1890, p.188.

In 1887 Alfred Jones of Halifax remarked that he had noticed in the press that the Government had decided not to send out any more cruisers for the protection of the fisheries, and asked for further information. Macdonald said that he was not aware of any such decision.[1] Later in the same session the sum of $125,000 was appropriated for steamers and vessels for fishery protection.[2] In 1888 after his return from Washington, Sir Charles Tupper gave the House a very thorough summary of the negotiations at Washington which had led to the Chamberlain-Bayard Treaty (not accepted by the American Senate,) but which had failed to secure a reciprocity agreement. His performance at Washington was severely criticized by Opposition members, notably Mr. Davies of Prince Edward Island, who however did not advise that the Canadian Parliament refuse to accept the treaty.[3] In the following year the Government's policy respecting the fisheries was again roundly criticized by Wilfrid Laurier, who blamed it for the continuance of unfriendly relations between the two

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1887, p.382.
[2] " " " " 1887, p.1081ff.
[3] " " " " 1888, p.673.

countries, and advised that steps be taken to secure a friendly reciprocal agreement.[1]

A topic that aroused the curiosity of members on occasion was that of empire federation, which was being widely advocated by both the Imperial Federation League in Great Britain and by the subsidiary body in Canada. In 1885 the following conversation took place in the House of Commons:

> "Mr. Edgar enquired: Whether any correspondence has taken place between the High Commissioner in London and the Government on the subject of Imperial Federation, and whether the Government has received copies of the resolutions passed at the Conferences on Imperial Federation held in London during the past year, or any communications upon the subject of Imperial Federation from the Colonial Secretary, or from any organizations formed in London for the purpose of promoting that object?
>
> Mr. Chapleau: No correspondence has taken place between the Government and the High Commissioner, or the Colonial Secretary, or any organization, on the subject of Imperial Federation....
>
> Mr. Edgar enquired: Whether it is the intention of the Government to submit for the consideration of the House during the present Session any proposals upon the subject of Federation of the Empire?
>
> Sir John A. Macdonald: It is not."[2]

In 1886 Sir Richard Cartwright again brought up the subject of Imperial Federation, and quoted from a

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1889, p.323ff.
[2] " " " " 1885, p.51

speech of Sir John Macdonald's at a convention in Toronto in 1881, which clearly revealed the Prime Minister's attitude towards Imperial Federation. On this occasion Macdonald said:

> "We are told that we want an Imperial federation ....I tell you Imperial federation is utterly impracticable. We could never agree to send a number of men over to England to sit in Parliament there and vote away our rights and privileges. I am, as far as this question goes, up to the handle, a Home Ruler. We will govern our own country. We will put on the taxes ourselves. If we choose to misgovern ourselves, we will do so...."[1]

On the same occasion Thomas White of Cardwell referred to another famous speech, that of Edward Blake at Aurora, in which he expressed his approval of the principles which Macdonald abhorred.[2] However there is no evidence that either leader was speaking for his party, or that there was a division along party lines on the principle of Imperial Federation.

In 1887 James Edgar asked for copies of correspondence relative to the Imperial Conference which began in London on April 4, 1887, and of instructions which were furnished to the Canadian representatives. He expressed the fear that the British authorities were trying to establish a connection so close that the

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1886, p.33-4.
[2] " " " " 1886, p.33-4.

Colonies would be dragged into Imperial wars, and hinted broadly that he suspected the Imperial Federation League of exerting a potent and undesirable influence in this direction. He concluded with the following words,

> "We have no spare men to send away to assist in governing remote dependencies of the Empire, and what is more, I hope that we shall always try to exercise such powers of self-government as we possess and extend them as far as we can."[1]

The above discussion is by no means a complete account of all of the debates which took place on the topics under discussion. Some of the debates, particularly those on reciprocity, trade relationships, and the fisheries, were extremely long, and it is impossible to summarize them briefly. But perhaps enough has been said to bring out the general trend of opinion in Canada as it was expressed in the House of Commons. It is clear that as far as external relationships were concerned Canadians were interested primarily in such matters as Canada's external trade, her fisheries, her boundary problems, and her position as a close neighbor of the United States and as a unit of the British Empire. It is also evident that there was a wide divergence of opinion on most major issues, often, although not always,

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1887, p.219-220.

along party lines. Finally, although interest in the larger problems of international relations appeared to be increasing, Canada was still too immature and isolationistic to feel any great concern except where she was involved in some situation which affected her directly.

CHAPTER IV

BETWEEN MACDONALD AND LAURIER 1891-1896

A. Canadian Affairs 1891-1896

The decline of the Conservatives, already in evidence during Macdonald's last years, was greatly accelerated after his death in 1891. There was no prominent leader present to replace him, and of such as were available, several were removed from the political scene by illness or death during the next few years. To make matters worse a multitude of misfortunes combined to harass the Conservatives and steadily weaken their position.

Macdonald was succeeded as Prime Minister by Sir John Abbott, a lawyer and former annexationist who had been serving as Government leader in the Senate. He was a compromise choice, and though he was regarded only as a stop-gap he revealed during his brief span of office considerable tact and political ability. A deluge of charges of corruption in government administration during Macdonald's last years broke loose after Abbott became Prime Minister, and the session of 1891 came to be known as the "Scandal Session". The Conserva-

tives replied with similar charges of corruption against the Opposition, which were borne out by unsavoury revelations respecting the Liberal government of Honoré Mercier in Quebec, and when Abbott resigned owing to ill health after eighteen months it did not appear that the Conservatives had lost much ground.

Abbott was succeeded in 1892 by Sir John Thompson, a man of great ability and integrity, who was handicapped by the fact that he was a Roman Catholic convert from Protestantism and consequently unpopular with the Orangemen of Ontario. However Mackenzie Bowell, himself an Orangeman, supported him loyally, and Thompson governed successfully for two years mainly by shelving important and troublesome domestic issues such as the rising question of separate schools in Manitoba. His chief accomplishment was in the field of foreign affairs, notably the settlement of the Bering Sea fur sealing dispute. His sudden death at Windsor Castle in 1894 was an unexpected and severe blow to the party.

Mackenzie Bowell, a man of rather moderate ability, was chosen as the next Prime Minister largely as a concession to the Orangemen who had supported Thompson. He assumed office at a time when Conservative

troubles were multiplying rapidly, and his position was made much more insecure because his advisors provided him with only lukewarm support, and were themselves divided on vital issues. He endeavored to pass a remedial bill to restore the separate schools in Manitoba which the Provincial Legislature had abolished in 1890, but when seven of his ministers suddenly resigned, apparently in protest against his lack of leadership, he had no course but to resign himself.

The Conservatives hastily summoned Sir Charles Tupper, who had been serving as Canadian High Commissioner in London, to attempt to stem the breach, but it was too late. Tupper still retained all his old perception and ability, if not his physical stamina, and commanded a great deal of respect in all sections of the country, but the cards were stacked against him. He was faced with an opponent of ability comparable to that of Macdonald himself in the figure of Wilfrid Laurier, who had been able to turn both the tariff issue and the separate schools question to Liberal advantage, and now, as the only outstanding French Canadian, commanded the support in Quebec which had formerly been given to Cartier, Macdonald, and Langevin. In the general elections of 1896 the Conser-

vatives were defeated in nearly every province in the Dominion except Manitoba, and the Liberals came to power for the first time in eighteen years, with a majority of over thirty. A new era in Canadian history had begun.

B. The International Scene, 1891-1896

This period witnessed a continuation of the formation of alliances in Europe and an increase of tension in international relationships. The fall of Bismarck hastened the collapse of the system he had built up so carefully, and with German foreign policy in the hands of the rash young William II her voice in world affairs became less subtle and more bellicose. The failure to renew the Re-insurance Pact with Russia in 1890, and the renewal of the Triple Alliance with Italy and Austria in the following year, had the almost unavoidable effect of causing Russia and France to draw closer together. Conversations were begun which resulted in a military agreement in 1892, and by the end of 1893 this had developed into a formal alliance designed mainly to protect the two nations from attack by the Triple Alliance. In 1892 Russia began to build the Trans-Siberian Railway with the aid of a large French loan.

French efforts to detach Italy from the Triple Alliance were countered by German attempts to win back the favour of Russia; the latter with such little success that by 1893 the German Reichstag could be persuaded to pass a new Army Bill introducing two years' compulsory service and greatly strengthening the German military machine.

At the same time Germany was becoming estranged from Great Britain. That nation had in the past relied upon her insular position of so-called "splendid isolation" to keep herself free from continental entanglements, but with her world-wide commitments it was becoming increasingly difficult for her to continue doing this, and the other European powers wondered with increasing curiosity for whose side her "casting vote" would be given. British relations with both France and Russia were still clouded over various issues such as Egypt and Afghanistan, but Britain also looked on Germany's new and vigorous colonial policy with increasing alarm. The opening of the Kiel Canal in 1895 and Germany's avowed intention of building a large ocean-going navy also met with little favour in British eyes. British fear of German ambitions turned to open anger during the South African crisis in 1895-1896. The ill-

starred Jameson raid, which had probably met with as much disapproval in Britain as elsewhere, had aroused in Germany a great deal of sympathy for the Boers. When the Boers succeeded in repulsing the attack, the Kaiser was unwise enough to send a telegram of congratulation to President Kruger. British suspicions that the Kaiser was in secret and mischievous negotiations with the rebellious Boers were coupled with open anger that British predominance in South Africa should be questioned and there is no doubt that the incident had something to do with Britain's final decision to support the Dual Alliance. Germany's partners in the Triple Alliance both regretted the growing estrangement between Germany and Great Britain, both having good reasons for wanting British friendship, and Italy openly avowed that she did not want to become involved in a war which would make her long coast-line vulnerable to attacks from the British navy.

In 1894 war broke out between the eastern powers, China and Japan, and the world watched in wonder as the newly westernized and industrialized Japan proceeded to inflict a speedy defeat on her gigantic but backward neighbour. Negotiations for peace were begun at Shimonoseki in March 1895, with the Japanese imposing

humiliating and crippling terms, but after Germany, Russia, and France had intervened Japan was forced to modify her demands, and the peace was finally signed by the Chinese Emperor on May 8. Germany after a show of friendship had led in compelling the Japanese to renounce their victory, and had won such a degree of enmity from that nation that the event led to the Japanese entry into the First World War against her. Great Britain on the other hand had remained aloof, and had won a measure of Japanese gratitude. Germany's attempts to win Russian favour by supporting her in the Far East had no permanent effect, and thus while failing to win the friendship of that nation she had drawn further away from Britain and alienated the Japanese. It was evident that the hand of the master was missing.

C. Canadian External Relationships, 1891-1896

The Bering Sea Fur Sealing Controversy

The most important international event which directly concerned Canada was the negotiation of a settlement of the dispute with the United States over fur sealing in the Bering Sea.

The American government had become interested in the seal fisheries of the Bering Sea after the purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867, and followed the policy of restricting seal hunting, not only by foreigners, but by Americans also. The Canadian government protested that the United States was trying to monopolize the industry, and when Canadian fishermen attempted to continue their activities a number of their boats were seized and confiscated, particularly after 1886. In 1892 it was finally agreed to hold a conference to arbitrate the matter, and in the following year the tribunal met in Paris. Sir John Thompson was one of the two British Empire delegates, and the rest of the tribunal was made up of two members from the United States and one each from France, Italy, and Sweden.

The award was favorable to Canada from a legal standpoint, as it was decided, contrary to American claims, that the Bering Sea was to be considered part of the Pacific Ocean and that American property rights to seals did not extend beyond the three mile limit. Canada was also given a cash award as compensation for the American seizure of her vessels. However the United States was also essentially satisfied with the award, as it upheld her desire to limit both the extent and the

manner of the seal fishing industry. A closed season was declared for part of each year, and the use of nets, steamers, explosives and guns was forbidden altogether.

The award is usually considered to have been eminently fair, but unfortunately its provisions were not observed, and in 1911 it became necessary to consider the question all over again. Probably the most satisfactory aspect from Canada's viewpoint was the prominent part taken by Sir John Thompson in the discussions, and his defense of Canadian rights. As Canada's representative at the Intercolonial Conference in Ottawa in 1893, and at a later conference in London in 1894, respecting merchant shipping, he again took a leading role, and appeared as the champion of Canadian autonomy. It was in the field of foreign and imperial relations that Sir John Thompson made his greatest contribution to Canadian development.

The Commercial Treaty With France (1893)

In 1893 a trade treaty was signed with France, noteworthy because it was the first important one to be negotiated between Canada and a European country other than Britain, and also because a Canadian had the most important part in its achievement. Sir Charles Tupper,

the High Commissioner in London, undertook to negotiate a treaty which would rectify the trade situation between the two countries - a situation so lop-sided that France's exports to Canada outweighed her imports by ten to one. With the help of the British Ambassador at Paris, Lord Dufferin, and after considerable haggling with the French officials, an agreement was finally reached, which gave certain specified exports of each country most-favoured-nation treatment in the other. Tupper had kept in constant touch with the Canadian government throughout the negotiations, and had tried conscientiously to follow its directions. He was hurt and disappointed, therefore, when many of his colleagues criticized the treaty and were openly reluctant to ratify it in Parliament. It had in fact rather a rough road to travel in the Canadian House of Commons before it was passed, but it was finally ratified in 1895.

Other agreements reached at about the same time between Great Britain and Spain gave Canada concessions in trade with the latter country and the West Indies. Canada had little part in these latter arrangements, but was glad to accept them, as they gave her cheaper access to a large number of tropical and semi-tropical products.

D. Hansard and Canadian External Relationships, 1891-1896

As was suggested previously, Tupper's commercial treaty with Francewas severely criticised in the House, and even the Government appeared to be in doubt as to whether to ratify it. In March 1893 James Lister of West Lambton riding brought up the subject, reading an article from the Montreal Star which expressed surprise that the Hon. G.E. Foster, Minister of Finance, should have stated in the Commons that he would not ask the House to ratify the French treaty that session, as there were features of the treaty with which the Government was not satisfied. The article further stated that the Government should not withhold consent to the Treaty, because it had been negotiated with their full knowledge and approval, and in accordance with their wishes.

Mr. Foster in reply said that he considered that if a treaty was to be ratified by Parliament then the representatives of the people should have a full opportunity to consider it. David Mills of Bothwell concurred in this view and also criticized the terms of the treaty, saying in part:[1]

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1893, p.2474.

> "When that treaty provides that it shall not come into operation without the sanction of this House, the sanction of this House is not be be regarded as a mere formal matter but as a matter of substance. I cannot understand how a gentleman of the intelligence and ability of Sir Charles Tupper could have for one moment entertained such one-sided propositions as those embraced in this treaty - a treaty to some extent in the interests of France, so far as it goes, but to no extent whatever in the interests of this country."

Since Mills was a Liberal, and Foster a Conservative, it is evident that there was opposition to the Treaty from both sides of the House.

Lister continued by censuring the Government for not supporting a treaty which had apparently been framed according to its instructions, and William O'Brien of Muskoka took the same view --

> "If it is true that the first intimation which the authorities at home and Sir Charles Tupper had of any objection on the part of the Government to this treaty, was the statement made by the Minister of Finance the other evening, we cannot be surprised that Sir Charles Tupper felt a good deal of annoyance."[1]

Other opinions were expressed pro and con in this and later discussions, and it is evident that while some held that the Government should endorse a treaty negotiated under their direction, others took the view that in a case like this Parliament should examine the

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1893, p.2477.

treaty thoroughly before making up its mind, particularly when the terms appeared to be disadvantageous to Canada. Some Conservatives as well as Liberals held this latter view.

The old question of Imperial Federation was still brought up occasionally, and in 1891 Guillaume Amyot of Bellechasse asked,

> "Is the High Commissioner for Canada at London authorized by the Government to promote Imperial Federation....? Are the Government of Canada in favour of the establishment of Imperial federation? Have the Government a fixed policy as to the establishment of an Imperial federation....?"[1]

Sir Hector Langevin said in reply,

> "In answer to the Hon. gentleman I may say, to the first question, that the High Commissioner has no authority from the Government. The Government have not considered the subjects mentioned in the remaining questions."[2]

In connection with Canada's Imperial relationships, and perhaps stimulated by her growing trade connections, a motion introduced by the Liberal Mills of Bothwell in 1892 is worthy of note. He asked the House to declare that

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1891, p.2153.

[2] " " " " 1891, p.2153-4.

> "the time has come when commercial treaties, in the interests of Canada, should be negotiated by persons who are responsible to the Government of Canada and for whose acts the advisers of the Crown in Canada should be held responsible to the House of Commons."[1]

However after debate the motion was defeated on a party division, by a Conservative majority of 106 to 62.

In 1892 a motion introduced by Dalton McCarthy of North Simcoe was passed, which in its amended form read as follows,

> "That it is expedient that communication be opened with Her Majesty's Government in order to bring about such fuller representation of Canadian interests at Washington and at the Capitols of other countries in which such representation may be found desirable as may be consistent with the proper relations which should exist between Great Britain and Canada."

In the following session he asked the Minister of Finance to state the result of the ensuing communication to England. Foster replied in part,

> "Sir John Abbott and myself, when in London had several conferences with the Colonial and Foreign Offices.... My impression as a result of these conversations is that serious difficulties appear to be in the way of Canada having representatives at foreign capitols with ambassadorial or ministerial functions.... My impression, also, is that the Foreign Office and the Government will be willing to facilitate in any way a full representation of Canada's interest, through their Minister, at any of these capitols...."[2]

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1892, p.1104ff.
[2] " " " " 1893, p.1614-5.

The short discussion is revealing in that it shows both Canada's increasing desire for more diplomatic and commercial independence and Britain's reluctance to grant these to her.

The House was strangely silent during the arbitration of the Bering Sea fur sealing controversy, and not a great deal was said about it afterwards, except that complaints were voiced occasionally over the fact that the United States had delayed paying the money compensation which the tribunal had awarded Canada. In 1896 Sir Richard Cartwright remarked,

"To the best of my recollection, about ten years have elapsed since Canadian vessels were seized on the high seas, hundreds of miles distant from shore, and Canadian seamen were thrown into prison; and up to the present time not one copper of damages has been paid to us. I think we ought to know exactly what position these matters are in...."

John Costigan, Minister of Marine and Fisheries replied,

"I may say that a convention to arrange the terms upon which commissioners should act to settle these claims has just been terminated...."

It may be assumed that the reason the House did not have more to say about the award was chiefly that it was reasonably well satisfied with the decision.

Besides the subjects dealt with above, there were occasional references to matters dealt with previously, for example reciprocity with the United States,[1] Home Rule for Ireland,[2] and Chinese immigration.[3] Regarding the last-mentioned subject, a Bill was passed in 1892 to regulate and restrict Chinese immigration still further, and during the discussion David Gordon of Vancouver Island read a long list of petitions from all parts of the country asking that Chinese immigration into Canada be prohibited.[4] It appears that public opinion was rising in favour of increased restriction of immigration from China, probably because the need for it, to help build the Canadian Pacific Railway, had disappeared.

In summary, it is difficult to assess accurately the trends of opinion on world affairs in the House of Commons during this period. Changes of leadership were so frequent, and party strife was so keen, and at the same time so involved, that one can hardly identify any consistent or recognizable policy in foreign affairs.

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1893, p.341.
[2] " " " " 1892, p.3335.
[3] " " " " 1892, p.4631.
[4] " " " " 1892, p.4633.

The weakening position of the Conservative party, and its resulting disunity, effectively prevented it from following any steady foreign policy, and the pressure of domestic affairs, with the increasing tempo of the struggle for power as the elections of 1896 approached, caused both parties to concentrate on internal rather than external affairs.

CHAPTER V

THE ADMINISTRATION OF SIR WILFRID LAURIER, PART I (1896-1904)

A. Canadian Affairs 1896-1904

Wilfrid Laurier at his accession to power had to settle two delicate and pressing problems -- separate schools and tariffs -- which had wrecked the Conservative machine and still threatened to cause trouble in the future. His handling of the separate schools dispute with the Manitoba provincial government showed courage and firmness as well as political astuteness. Refusing to yield to the threats of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Quebec, and standing by his pre-election promise to avoid coercion, he arranged a compromise settlement between federal and provincial authorities which gave a good measure of satisfaction to both. A voluntary amendment of Manitoba law by the provincial legislature provided for denominational religious instruction when requested by a specified number of parents, and for bilingual teaching when ten or more pupils in a school spoke a language other than English. To the indignation of the Quebec bishops no attempt was made

by the federal government to restore separate schools forcibly, and their violent opposition to Laurier continued until a mild rebuke from Rome advised them to moderate their attitude.

The tariff question was not so difficult to settle. Many protectionist voters had supported the Liberals in the elections of 1896, and for this reason and others Laurier decided not to reduce tariffs drastically. A tariff commission was appointed to hear evidence and prepare information, with the result that although necessary revisions in the tariff were made no drastic reductions took place, and the National Policy was in the main left undisturbed. The most noticeable change was in the lowering of duties on British imports, a process that came to be known as Imperial Preference, and was received very favourably in Great Britain. Laurier's decision to retain the National Policy was all the more acceptable to Canadians since the United States had recently enacted the Dingley Tariff, highest since the Civil War. Even pronounced free-traders were not enthusiastic about granting low tariffs to the United States, as it would obviously be a one-sided concession.

Laurier's great talents and rising popularity were enhanced by the fact that he was able to gather around him a group of advisers usually rated as one of the most outstanding in Canadian parliamentary history. It is often referred to as the "Ministry of all the talents", and included not only five former Provincial premiers, W.S. Fielding of Nova Scotia, A.G. Blair of New Brunswick, L.H. Davies of Prince Edward Island, de Lotbinière of Quebec, and Sir Oliver Mowat of Ontario, but also men of such outstanding ability as Clifford Sifton, Israel Tarte, and Sir Richard Cartwright. With this assortment of talent Laurier proceeded to give Canada a more beneficial and positive type of government than it had known since the best days of Sir John A. Macdonald.

Laurier was astute enough to refrain from becoming submerged in a burdensome government department, and, taking only the Presidency of the Council, retained freedom to devote his time to larger issues. His task was made easier by a return to Canada of prosperity, which coincided with a period of expanding industry and trade throughout the world. Industrialization was proceeding apace in Europe, Japan, and the United States, and raw materials such as Canada could produce were

required in steadily increasing quantities. The westward march of the settler in the United States had reached its limits, and the supply of available land there was becoming exhausted. This meant that Canada's prairie land was the only large fertile area on the North American continent that remained to be settled, and foreign interest in the Canadian West reached new heights. Gold discoveries in British Columbia and the Yukon also helped to focus attention on Canada as a source of precious metals. Under these circumstances it is little wonder that Canada shared in the general prosperity, and that a period of boom set in. The Liberals at first reaped the full benefit of these abnormal conditions.

The outstanding internal development during Laurier's regime was in the settlement of the Great West. Clifford Sifton was appointed Minister of the Interior late in 1896, and under him a vigorous immigration policy was instituted which soon gave telling results. Widespread advertising in both the United States and Europe, easy regulations for homesteading, an efficient immigration service, and numerous devices for assisting new settlers and improving agriculture were all employed, with the result that immigration increased by leaps and bounds. The yearly influx of settlers from the United

States increased from 2500 in 1897 to over 60,000 in 1907, and continued to reach even higher totals in the years that followed, while total immigration from all countries had by 1911 reached the staggering total of over 300,000 annually. In the same year wheat production in the Canadian West, which in 1900 had amounted to only 25,000,000 bushels, had jumped to a total of nearly 200,000,000 bushels. All things considered, there are strong grounds for maintaining that the greatest contributions of the Laurier government to Canadian welfare are to be found in its intelligent and aggressive immigration policy, and in its assistance to agriculture.

The opening of the West, the successful immigration policy, and the expansion of industry and agriculture, all urged upon the Government the need for expanded railway facilities. To meet this need railways were constructed at a rapid rate, indeed to such an extent that Canada's needs at that time were greatly exceeded. It soon became obvious that Laurier had gone too far, and had permitted so many railways to be built, that not only was Canada burdened with a large debt from railway construction, but was also saddled with a number of lines which did not pay the operating expenses. The Government co-operated with the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company

in the construction of a second trans-continental railway, by building the section between Moncton and Winnipeg, while the company took the responsibility for the part between Winnipeg and Prince Rupert. After great financial difficulties the line was finally completed in 1915. Meanwhile the Canadian Northern, which had refused to participate in this scheme, continued to borrow and build privately until it had a line from Quebec to Vancouver. Laurier's lack of business acumen was nowhere more clearly shown than in his failure to bring the Grand Trunk Pacific and the Canadian Northern together, or to realize that three transcontinental railways were far in excess of Canada's needs at that time. Eventually the Government had to take over both railways, and it took the congested traffic of the Second World War to put the resulting Canadian National system on a paying basis.

B. The International Scene, 1896-1904

These years at the turn of the century were marked by the formation of more alliances and by increasing participation in world affairs of the United States and Japan. Great Britain, who still stood alone in 1895, became increasingly conscious of her isolated position

in the years that followed, and, abandoning her traditional policy of "splendid isolation", began to search for allies.

A number of events after 1895 combined to impress on British authorities the loneliness of their position in European diplomacy, and the need for reaching an understanding with other powers. In 1897 Admiral Tirpitz became Minister for Naval Affairs in Germany, and shortly afterwards the first German naval program was announced, becoming effective in the following year. It was followed by another and still more ambitious Navy Bill in 1900, and Britons with reason suspected that the Germans intended to build a fleet capable of challenging their own. In November 1897 Germany took the fine naval base of Kiao-Chau from China, and Russia followed suit in 1898 by seizing the warm water port of Port Arthur. Britain was decidedly hostile to both acquisitions, and by way of compensation took the rather inferior prize of Wei-Hai-Wei. At the same time France acquired Kwangschouan. In 1900 the Boxer rebellion broke out in China, and was forcibly suppressed, mainly by an international force from various European powers. Great Britain made use of the occasion to attempt to come to an understanding with Germany, with the prevention of

Russian pressure on North China as the main object in view, but the attempt failed, as had an earlier one in 1898. In 1898 British relations with France were embittered by the Fashoda crisis, when a body of troops under Sir Herbert Kitchener, having just broken the Khalifa's resistance in the Sudan and captured Khartum, met a small force of French soldiers under Captain Marchand at Fashoda. Marchand refused to vacate his position but after the dispute had been referred to the Home Governments it became obvious that the French could not maintain their hold on Fashoda, and Marchand had to withdraw. War had been narrowly averted, and the Dreyfus affair, which occurred about the same time, did nothing to improve relations between the two countries. Finally, in the Boer War of 1899-1902 Great Britain had public opinion throughout Europe arrayed against her. The rebellion of the Boers was put down, with the aid of small contingents from the overseas dominions, after an intense struggle, but the British were everywhere regarded as the oppressors of a freedom-loving people, and there had been talk of intervention by Russia, Germany, and France in favour of the Boers.

Consequently Great Britain's first alliance was greeted with applause at home. It was with Japan, and

was arranged by Lord Lansdowne in 1902 -- an epoch-making treaty because it was the first one negotiated between a European and a Far-Eastern power. It was followed soon by an entente with France. It was obvious by 1901 that there was no chance of a British-German alliance, and as a result any union of Great Britain with the Triple Alliance was also out of the question. Britain and France had recently been drawing closer together owing largely to the appointment of Delcassé, who was friendly to England, to the French Foreign Ministry in 1898. The main grounds for disagreement were overcome when France promised Britain a free hand in Egypt in return for a similar concession in Morocco, and other problems soon fell into line or were overlooked. The Anglo-French entente dated from April 1904, and it was obvious that Great Britain's casting vote had been given to France rather than to the Triple Alliance.

For the alienation of Britain Germany had only herself to blame. The vacillating policy of Holstein, who alternately courted and rebuffed British diplomats, the blustering speeches and tactless actions of the Kaiser, and the over-ambitious naval policy of Tirpitz, all had the effect of arousing British anger and suspicion,

and after 1900 British-German relations became steadily more clouded. German ambitions in the Near and Middle East led to the acquisition of the Bagdad Concession in 1903, and the initiation of plans to build a German railway right from Berlin to Bagdad and the Persian Gulf. Britain not only refused to join in the scheme but opposed it bitterly, and after 1903 Turkey was to be found in the orbit of the Central Powers. The Triple Alliance was re-affirmed in 1902, but the edge of this achievement was taken off by Delcassé's Reconciliation Pact with Italy in 1902, declaring that as far as Italy was concerned the Triple Alliance was not directed against France. In the following year Delcassé secured a secret Neutrality Agreement with Italy, who was now no longer bound by the Triple Alliance to fight either France or Britain.

The United States found herself being increasingly drawn into the current of world affairs, mainly as a result of her desire to preserve the Americas from European interference. President Cleveland stepped into the British Guiana-Venezuela boundary dispute in 1895, reaffirming the Monroe Doctrine and threatening that any use of force by Great Britain might lead to war with the United States. In 1898 the Spanish-American War broke

out, and with the speedy defeat of Spain European powers were compelled to deliberate over the appearance of a new major power on the western side of the Atlantic. In 1903 Venezuela was again aided by an American president, when Theodore Roosevelt threatened to send an American fleet to the Caribbean and by so doing compelled Great Britain, Italy, and Germany to moderate their demands upon that nation.

An attempt to relieve the international tension was made in 1899, largely at the instigation of the Russian Czar, when the first International Peace Conference was held at the Hague. Its purpose was to arrange for disarmament and for the regulation of international conduct and relationships, but it was a failure, owing mainly to distrust of the Czar's motives by the other Powers.

C. Canadian International Relationships and Hansard 1896-1904

The South African War 1899-1902

On October 11, 1899, war broke out in South Africa between Great Britain and the Boers of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. The outbreak was the culmination of many disagreements of long standing,

which had quickened after the discovery of gold in the Transvaal in 1885 had begun to lure great numbers of fortune seekers into the country. The brave and tenacious resistance of the Boers surprised the whole world, and it was only after three years of bitter struggle that the British were able to subdue their sturdy back-veld adversaries. Enemies of Britain openly desired to see the Boers victorious, and liberals everywhere watched their struggle with sympathy.

The Boer War posed an especially difficult problem for Laurier and his government. Not only was there a divergence of views between the Canadian and the Imperial governments, but also a clear-cut difference of opinion within Canada. As far as the Imperial government was concerned, Laurier took his usual stand that when Britain was at war Canada as part of the empire was automatically at war also, but insisted that the extent of Canadian participation, if any, was a matter for the Canadian parliament to decide. This attitude was highly disappointing to such arch-Imperialists as Joseph Chamberlain, who wanted all-out Empire participation, but failed to understand the delicate situation facing Laurier at home.

In Canada Laurier was urged with growing insistence by English-speaking Canadians to give immediate, official, and extensive aid to Britain. On the other hand French-speaking Canada, true to its isolationist traditions, insisted that Canada should not involve herself in a war with which she was not directly concerned, and demanded that no help be given. Faced with a threatened cleavage, Laurier saw that a compromise was the only solution offering any possibility of success. The French Canadians would have to accept the sending of some Canadian troops, while the English Canadians would have to be content with a comparatively small contribution. So Laurier announced that the Canadian government would equip and transport up to 1000 troops, who would thereafter be paid and maintained by the British government, but that Canada would neither send an official contingent nor allow this contribution to become a precedent. When Britain suffered serious setbacks during the "Black Week" of December 1899 a second contingent was equipped and dispatched, and before the war was over more than 7000 Canadians had taken part, of whom about 2500 were recruited and equipped by the Canadian government. Of the rest most were raised either by the British government or privately by Lord Strathcona.

There were some interesting consequences to Laurier's decision. The Canadian soldiers, few in numbers though they were, served with great distinction, and effectually banished the jibes that they were of poor fighting calibre and inferior to British troops. A battalion of Canadian soldiers in 1900 released the British garrison at Halifax for service elsewhere, and with their departure the policy of keeping Imperial troops in Canada was ended. Henri Bourassa, one of Laurier's ablest lieutenants, broke with him in disapproval of his policy of even moderate assistance, and eventually gathered around him enough support from the ranks of the French-Canadian Liberals to seriously threaten Laurier's position in Quebec. In the elections of 1900, the Conservatives attempted to capitalize on Laurier's difficulties with the racial issue and the question of military support for Great Britain, representing him as "Imperialistic" in Quebec and "disloyal" in Ontario, but their campaign failed completely. Laurier was returned with an increased majority, and as Tupper had suffered a personal defeat in his own constituency, he resigned from the active leadership of the Conservative party in favour of Robert Borden.

Parliament sat from March 16 to August 11 in 1899, and consequently was not in session when war broke out. As a result Laurier's decision had to be made with-

out reference to parliament, by order-in-council, and it is likely that he spent many anxious moments before making up his mind what course to take.

However the outbreak of war was not altogether unexpected. On July 13 Sam Hughes, the militarily inclined member for North Victoria, Ontario, drew attention to a newspaper article reporting that the colony of Queensland had offered the Mother Country 250 men in case of trouble with the Transvaal, and said,

> "I take this opportunity of again pressing upon the Canadian Government the necessity of our taking some action in the premises, also to fulfil our part as the senior colony of all the British colonies. I know it for a positive fact that there would be no trouble in enrolling, not merely 250 men, but, if necessary, thousands of men in Canada to go to the assistance of the mother land in a war with the Transvaal, where more than in any other part of the world, the necessity arises to vindicate the honor of the old flag."[1]

Laurier replied that he hoped there would be no need of such action, and that the difficulties might be settled peaceably. Sir Charles Tupper echoed the Prime Minister's sentiments, but added that he thought the best way to avoid hostilities would be for all colonies to declare themselves unequivocally in support of the Mother Country.

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1899, p.7328-9.

[illegible]

[illegible]

> [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

On July 31 of the same year Laurier introduced a resolution expressing regret that British subjects were being ill-treated in the Transvaal and support of the Imperial authorities' attempts to restore justice. Tupper was not present that day, but had expressed approval of the motion in a letter which Sir Wilfrid read to the House. All members who spoke declared their hearty approval of the motion, and A. McNeill of North Bruce quoted an "impartial witness" who said

> "British subjects in the Transvaal are denied all rights of citizenship, they are insulted,plundered, even murdered by their oppressors.... Their humble petitions have been openly flouted, although they were signed by 38,000 law-abiding petitioners in 1894".[1]

The motion was agreed to, all the members of the House rising to their feet and singing the National Anthem.

When the House met for the next session, in February 1900, the Boer War was in full swing, and two Canadian contingents had already arrived in South Africa. The participation of Canadian troops in a major war on far-away battlefields for the first time had a great

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1899, p.8997-8.

[illegible]

> [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

effect on the House of Commons, and the war was perhaps the leading topic for discussion in this and the following session. All aspects of the situation were discussed in detail, casualty lists were read, the quality of supplies criticized, the rates of soldiers pay analyzed, and a bill providing a sum of $2,000,000 for the expenses of the Canadian volunteers was passed. Many long speeches were made, filled with high sounding affirmations of loyalty to Great Britain, and members appeared to vie with one another in extolling the glory of the British Empire and protesting the justice of the British cause. There appeared to be no exceptions to the general attitude of loyalty to British institutions and the British connection, but some members, particularly French Canadians, were not enthusiastic about Canadian participation in the war. On the other hand many others, particularly Conservatives, led by Sir Charles Tupper, castigated the government on the grounds that its action was dilatory and inadequate. In the debate on the reply to the Speech from the Throne, Tupper concluded his speech with the following remarks,

> "Even if my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) had not the resolution of the House of Commons and of the Senate of Canada, - and under circumstances where delay might be irreparable - he must have known what the public sentiment was, and he knew he had a perfect right, according to the British parliamentary practice in force in Canada, to take from the public treasury what money was necessary to meet the unexpected conditions that had arisen, and to ask parliament to sustain his action afterwards.... I believe, Sir, that it is the gravest emergency that has ever presented itself to the British Empire, and for that reason I have confined my remarks exclusively to it, postponing the consideration of other questions until the government is pleased to submit their measures to the House.... I trust that the government will to the fullest extent meet this great patriotic upheaval of public sentiment throughout the Dominion of Canada, and leave nothing undone which will tend to reflect the highest honour on Canada, as a part of the great British Empire to which we are so proud to belong."[1]

In his reply Laurier attempted to justify the small delay which had taken place and to prove that Tupper himself had expressed the view on previous occasions that Canada should not have to take part in the secondary wars of Great Britain. He said in part,

> "I do not see that any man can properly find fault with us for having weighed and reflected before we came to a conclusion. It was due to the country at large, whose interests were entrusted to our hands, that we should not move hastily, but only after due consideration.... This is a constitutionally governed country; this is a government of the people for the people.... And the hon. gentleman

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1900, pp.60-61.

> knows very well that there is only one way, under constitutional government, by which the people can speak, and that is by the voice of their representatives in parliament assembled.... I repeat that unless we had a strong mandate behind us of public opinion, it would have been criminal in us to plunge our hands into the public treasury, however worthy the motive might have been....
>
> ....There are many Canadians who are not ready to take part in the secondary wars of England or to contribute to the defense of the empire in any part of it. Amongst the men who have taken that view, amongst those who have stated, time and time again, that it would not be fit for Canada to take part in the secondary wars of England or to contribute to the defense of the empire at large, one of the most, if not the most eminent, is my hon. friend who leads the opposition."[1]

The defection of Henri Bourassa from the Liberal ranks was followed by a resolution, which he introduced into the House in the session of 1901, and which read in part as follows,

> "Whilst strictly adhering to the fundamental principle of Canadian autonomy, and refusing to admit that the intervention of Canada in South Africa has committed this country to any future participation in the wars and policy of Great Britain,.... This House... declares that there is no necessity for sending any more Canadian troops to South Africa, and that the enlistment of recruits for the South African constabulary should not be allowed to take place in Canada."[2]

Laurier himself led in refuting the arguments of his former colleague, and spoke as follows,

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1900, pp.63-5.
[2] " " " " 1901, p.1326.

> "Well remembering the uncompromising hostility which my hon. friend showed to our policy, nearly two years ago, of sending contingents to South Africa,... I must say I was little prepared for the present attitude of my hon. friend. I would have supposed that he would be a stalwart to the end, and that, having refused to send troops to South Africa he would not ask us to send advice to England. But my hon. friend has taken an attitude altogether different from that. He would not allow us to offer troops; he now wants to send advice. He would not fight for the cause of England, but he is willing to sit at the council board in discussing the cause of England to-day."[1]

Laurier stressed that since the war was approaching its end Bourassa's resolution was essentially irrelevant, and said that the important thing was whether or not the motion should be accepted, in view of Bourassa's well-known views. All members joined in opposition to Bourassa's motion, irrespective of party, and it was rejected by the overwhelming majority of 144 to 3. The only members who supported the motion were C. Angers of Charlevoix, Dominique Monet of Laprairie and Napierville, and of course Bourassa himself.[2]

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1901, p.1326-7.
[2] " " " " 1901, p.1366-7.

The Settlement of the Alaska Boundary Dispute (1903)

The purchase of Alaska from Russia by the United States in 1867 effectively removed Russian interest and influence in North American affairs, but it emphasized again the importance to Canada of her relationship with the United States. In the indefiniteness of the terms of the British treaty with Russia in 1825, inherited by the United States, lay possibilities of future trouble. Several suggestions were made to fix the boundary of Alaska and British North America, but nothing was done until the discovery of gold in the Yukon in 1897 made it imperative to come to some agreement.

In 1898 a Joint High Commission was appointed, to settle a number of questions of mutual interest to both Canada and the United States, including the Atlantic fisheries and the Alaska boundary. The Comission succeeded in forming new regulations for the Bering Sea and Great Lakes fisheries, and in settling certain other matters, but disbanded without reaching any agreement on the Alaskan boundary issue.

At length, after various suggestions had been put forward and rejected, in 1903 Great Britain and the United States finally agreed that a tribunal composed of three "impartial jurists of repute" from each side should

determine the meaning of the treaty of 1825. The tribunal met in London during September and October of 1903. It was composed of Lord Alverstone, Lord Chief Justice of England, A.B. Aylesworth, a Toronto lawyer, and Sir Louis Jetté, Lieutenant Governor of Quebec, representing the British Empire, and, for the United States, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts, Senator George Turner of Washington, and Elihu Root, a member of the Roosevelt cabinet. Canadians complained bitterly that the Americans had violated the terms of the agreement in appointing active politicians rather than "impartial jurists of repute", and as both Lodge and Turner had previously expressed strong opinions favouring the American claim the Canadian accusation appears to have been well founded.

The decisions of the tribunal, made public on October 20, 1903, fulfilled Canada's worst fears, as by a majority decision of four to two the claims of the United States were essentially upheld, and Canada received no salt water outlet in the Alaskan Panhandle. Both Jetté and Aylesworth refused to sign the award, and Alverstone was widely accused in both Canada and Great Britain of sacrificing Canadian and Empire interests to the Americans. The American case was undoubtedly the

stronger, however, and it is probable that without British help Canada could not have obtained a more favorable settlement. The most regrettable features about the whole affair were not the substance of the decision, which was essentially quite fair, but the methods by which it was reached, and the unreasonable and aggressive attitude of President Roosevelt, the more unjustifiable because an impartial and neutral board of judges would probably have awarded the decision to the United States on the basis of merit alone. The separation of four islands in the Portland Channel, so as to give two to Canada and two to the United States, may perhaps have been a suitable compromise, but as Keenleyside points out, "casts doubt upon the judicial quality of the whole award."[1] The decline in the Yukon's gold mining industry which followed made the decision appear less important, but if the Yukon should ever become active again the lack of a salt water outlet in Canadian territory would be keenly felt.

The Alaskan boundary was frequently referred to in the House, in a manner which indicated the concern the

[1] H.L. Keenleyside; "Canada and the United States",p.225.

members felt over the outcome of the dispute. In 1897 Sir Charles Tupper asked that information in the hands of the Department of Interior be made available, and the minister of that department, Clifford Sifton, willingly consented to do so, and at the same time acknowledged the importance of the question, saying,

> "The hon. gentleman (Sir Charles Tupper) is undoubtedly correct in his estimate of the importance of the question. The difference between the boundary line as claimed by the British authorities, and the boundary line as claimed by the United States authorities is very considerable, and the value of the territory which may be said to be practically in dispute, in view of the mineral discoveries in that region is, of course, very great."[1]

The matter was referred to frequently during the succeeding sessions, and in 1903, the year of the award, formed a leading topic of discussion. The news of the decision came out shortly before Parliament adjourned on October 24, and strong objections to the award were immediately voiced. Henri Bourassa gave a detailed recapitulation of all the circumstances surrounding the dispute, beginning with the early 1820's, and R.G. Macpherson, of Burrard constituency, voiced the objections of British Columbians to a treaty which cut them

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1897, p.3419.

off from the rich gold fields of the Yukon. Macpherson ended his speech by advocating the construction of a road from Vancouver to the Yukon.[1] Laurier and Borden both expressed wonderment at the terms of the treaty, and though they took the attitude that no definite opinions should be formed until they were in possession of full information on the case, it is evident that both were indignant. Borden said that three Canadians should have formed the British Empire delegation and blamed the Government for neglecting to consult Parliament regarding the matter,[2] while Laurier criticized the implication that Lord Alverstone had not acted with impartiality and spoke strongly against the American appointment of commission members who "could not qualify as impartial jurists".[3]

Other opinions were expressed, mostly of an indignant nature, with S.E. Gourley of Colchester and S. Hughes even going to the lengths of talking of the possibility of war, as the following excerpt from the debate reveals: Mr. Gourley:....

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1903, vol.vi,p.14791.
[2] " " " " 1903, vol.vi,p.14810.
[3] " " " ", 1903, vol.vi,p.14815.
(With reference to above debate, see pages 14773-14844)

> "We are not a weak colony. Six millions of free people would beat the United States single-handed in the contest. If we fought them as the Swiss people fought the power of Austria, we should beat them to a standstill. We are a powerful people, and occupy the best strategic position on this continent."
>
> Mr. Hughes (Victoria): "We beat them in 1812, when they were relatively forty times as populous as they are now."
>
> Mr. Gourley: "Of course. And we could do it again."[1]

By the time parliament met again, in March 1904, the high feeling had subsided somewhat, and about the only references to the matter were several requests by Borden that certain papers bearing on the case should be made available.[2]

Laurier and Imperial Relationships

In 1897 Laurier as Canada's representative attended Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebration in London. In the course of his visit he took part in the third Colonial Conference, in which representatives of Great Britain met with those of the colonies to discuss matters of mutual concern. Following this he paid a visit to France. In both countries he made a great impression and honors were heaped upon him -- Queen

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1903, vol.vi,pp.14842-3.
[2] " " " " 1904, vol.iii,p.5578.

Victoria knighted him, and in France he was presented with the ribbon of the Legion of Honor. In both countries he made a number of notable speeches, particularly in England, where he appeared to be inspired by the magnificence of the occasion, and dwelt in eloquent terms upon the grandeur of the British Empire and the growing importance of the colonies. Some of his political opponents charged that he was sacrificing his democratic principles in favour of Chamberlain's type of Imperialism, but Laurier proved their accusations false a short time afterwards when he successfully led a resistance movement at the Conference to Chamberlain's proposal of an Imperial Council and increased Empire centralization. His visit did much to publicize Canada's possibilities for settlement by Europeans, at a time when immigrants were urgently desired in Canada.

Five years later Laurier attended another Colonial Conference, held in London shortly after the death of Queen Victoria. Chamberlain was again the chief spokesman for Great Britain, while the important colonies were represented by their Prime Ministers. Laurier was accompanied by a notable delegation including W.S. Fielding, Sir Frederick Borden, and Sir William Mulock. Again it fell to Laurier to take the lead in

defending colonial prerogatives against the centralizing ambitions of Chamberlain, which had been sharpened by the experiences of united Empire action gained during the Boer War. Laurier, while approving the general principle of Empire co-operation, stood firmly against any measure of compulsion, or any tendency to limit the expanding autonomy of the Dominions. He upheld the idea of close trade relations, but believed that a system of trade preference was preferable to an outright customs union, and, applying the same principle to military co-operation, objected strongly to the principle of Canadian money contributions to Imperial forces. The withdrawal of the last Imperial troops from Halifax in 1900, and the final departure in 1904 from the practice of having Imperial senior officers and Commanders-in-Chief for the Canadian militia, were in line with his general view that Canada should assume responsibility for her own defense and have full control of her own affairs, both internal and external.

The Trade Negotiations With Germany and Belgium

The policy of imperial preference initiated by Canada in 1897 led to official protests from Germany and Belgium. These two countries had most-favoured-nation treaties with Britain dating from the 1860's, and so

claimed the same preferential treatment as was accorded her, but in 1898 Britain renounced these treaties in order to take advantage of the Canadian offer, and at the same time to assist Canadian economic progress. Retaliatory measures were taken by both Germany and Canada, Germany continuing most-favoured-nation treatment on a provisional basis to all British Empire countries except Canada, and Canada imposing a surtax of 10% on the goods of any country which discriminated against her. The tariff war between Canada and Germany lasted until 1910, and revealed the independent line of action that was now being taken by Canada in her economic affairs.

The question of trade relationships with Great Britain, Belgium, Germany, and other countries was brought up in the House in 1897 and debated thoroughly in 1898,[1] upon a motion of A. McNeil of North Bruce, to the effect that preferential trade with Great Britain was desirable, but apparently the House did not come to a division on this particular motion.

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1898, vol.ii, p.5808 ff.

A vast number of other questions concerning external relationships was discussed in the House during these early years of Laurier's administration. Some of them dealt with questions which had already been settled or have been discussed previously, such as the Bering Sea Seal Award, reciprocity with the United States, the Halifax Fishery Award, and Irish Home Rule. Some dealt with questions of comparatively minor significance, and others dealt with questions which appeared to be unimportant then but later became extremely important, such as the question of a Canadian navy.

It is evident that there was a much greater volume of discussion on matters affecting foreign relationships than at any time previously, both relatively and absolutely. While most of the discussion still centred on affairs which were of direct concern to Canada, an increasing amount of attention was being paid to larger world problems. Several reasons for this development can be given readily, among them the South African War, which took Canadian soldiers abroad for the first time, the increasing Canadian autonomy, and the growing complexity of imperial and foreign relations, particularly with Great Britain and the United States, but also with other Empire countries such as South Africa

and other foreign nations such as Belgium, France, and Germany.

CHAPTER VI

THE ADMINISTRATION OF SIR WILFRID LAURIER
PART II (1904-1911)

A. Canadian Affairs (1904-1911)

During the second half of his long premiership Laurier retained the position of unrivalled authority over parliament which he had won during the first half, but not without difficulty. So many of his leading advisers either deserted him or were cast overboard by Laurier himself that the Liberal government became almost a one-man administration - a situation which perhaps enhanced his personal prestige but in the long run had disastrous consequences for both Prime Minister and Liberal party.

The outstanding internal development was the admission in 1905 of two new provinces to Confederation, on equal terms with the others. They were carved from the part of the North West Terrorities south of the 60th parallel of latitude, and although there was some dispute over how many units should be formed from this large area,

it was finally decided that there should be two, Alberta and Saskatchewan, to be separated simply by the 110th meridian of longitude. The process of organizing the government of the two new provinces was marred by a revival of the separate schools controversy, and although it was settled by a provision essentially the same as that which had settled the issue in Manitoba ten years earlier, it caused a good deal of bitter debate and ill feeling. Clifford Sifton broke with Laurier over this question and left the government.

Laurier had little difficulty in winning the election of 1904, being aided by prosperous times and the steady development of the West, and emerged with a healthy majority of sixty-two seats in the House. He faced the next election, that of 1908, with a little more trepidation; as he had been having increasing trouble with his supporters, and the Conservatives were making the most of reputed scandals in the government services to levy charges of dishonesty and corruption against the administration. When the ballots had been counted, the Liberals found themselves still in office, but with their majority reduced from sixty two to forty seven.

During these years immigration continued steadily

on an increasing level, and Canada's population increased so rapidly that Laurier felt justified in prophesying that as the nineteenth century had been the century of the United States, so the twentieth century would be the century of Canada. The exodus of Canadians to the United States declined, to such an extent that in 1910 there were only 11,000 more native-born Canadians in the United States than in 1900.[1] Immigration from all countries between 1897 and 1912 totalled 2,250,000, and the total population increased from 5,371,315 in 1901 to 7,206,643 in 1911.[1] This rapid increase in population was matched by a corresponding development of agricultural production, and exports of wheat and other agricultural products rose to hitherto undreamed of heights. The rapid progress in practically all fields of human endeavor was the Laurier government's best claim for continued recognition by the people, and as suggested provided the main reason for Liberal victories at the polls in 1904 and 1908. The Government also had a creditable record in domestic and social legislation, including an act providing for old age annuities in 1908, another to improve the civil service system, and the Lemieux Act of 1907, which was drafted by Deputy Labor Minister Mackenzie King, and was designed to

[1] Carl Wittke: "History of Canada", p.255.

prevent stoppage of operations of public utilities in disputes between capital and labor.

In spite of this and other noteworthy legislation the Liberal party was entering upon a period of decline similar to that of the Conservative party during and after the last days of Macdonald, a decline marked by varying degrees of inefficiency, scandal, and party disruption. Henri Bourassa, one of Laurier's ablest assistants, had broken with him as early as 1899 over the question of sending Canadian troops to South Africa, and was gathering around himself an increasingly large following in Quebec. The Minister of Public Works, J. Israel Tarte, had supported the manufacturers' agitation for higher tariffs in an attempt to seize power for himself during Laurier's absence at the 1902 Colonial Conference, and Laurier on his return promptly asked for his resignation. A.G.Blair had resigned in 1903 after a dispute over railway policy, and Clifford Sifton had followed suit in 1905, having disagreed with Laurier over the question of separate schools in the West. Other defections followed, and the once-famous "Ministry of all the talents" became a decidedly mediocre administration. Charges of inefficiency and graft were levied against various departments, particularly those of Marine and Fisheries and of the

Interior, and other charges of favoritism and personal delinquency lowered the standing of the government in the eyes of the public. It was becoming increasingly evident that the Liberals were deteriorating as a party, and were becoming more interested in retaining office than in attending to their duties.

The election of 1911 was fought around various aspects of external affairs, including the question of naval appropriations and that of a renewal of reciprocity with the United States. An odd combination was formed to oppose Laurier's middle-of-the-road policy on naval matters, between Bourassa's Quebec Nationalists, who wanted only isolationism, and Borden's Conservatives, who thought that direct contribution to Great Britain, while objectionable in some respects, would be better than Laurier's proposed "tin-pot navy". In the matter of reciprocity Laurier appeared to have the support of large sections of the Dominion, including virtually the whole West, in his quest for a trade treaty with the United States. When that country in 1910 reversed its traditional policy and made an offer of reciprocity to Canada it appeared to be certain that a treaty would be arranged. Borden however revived the old annexation cry with decisive effect, and on these two issues the Laurier government in the 1911

election went down to a surprising and humiliating defeat.

B. The International Scene (1904-1911)

The outstanding development between 1904 and 1911 was the clear division of Europe into two great camps of armed powers, while in the atmosphere of steadily increasing tension all nations devoted more and more energy and money to making preparations for the now seemingly inevitable conflict. The Triple Alliance continued as one of the two major groups of powers, although Italy drew a little further away from the other two members and assumed an increasingly less responsible attitude. This lack of cordiality was accentuated in 1908 when Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina in spite of Italian disapproval. It was revealed even more strikingly in 1911 when Italy herself seized Tripoli, although knowing very well how badly the news would be received in Berlin and Vienna, where attempts to win the favour of the Mussulman world were still proceeding.

The rival group of powers, the Triple Entente, came into being in 1907, after Great Britain and Russia had managed to patch up their outstanding differences, particularly those respecting zones of influence in Persia. Since France had been Russia's ally since 1893, and since

Britain and France had established an entente in 1904, the little circle of friendly agreements was complete. The three nations were compelled to make common cause in the face of the threat of the Triple Alliance, and after 1907 were generally to be found speaking with one voice on major issues.

The Entente was of especial value to Russia, who was not only becoming more unfriendly with the Central Powers, but had been badly defeated by the Japanese in 1904-5. European nations had foreseen the war and had expected the speedy defeat of Japan. Russia also expected an easy victory but had not wanted to fight until her Trans-Siberian railway had been completed. The difficulty of both land and sea communication between European and Asiatic Russia, combined with the unexpected skill and vigor of the Japanese, proved to be decisive factors, and the Russians went down to a defeat almost as speedy and spectacular as that of the Chinese in 1895. Under the auspices of President Roosevelt a peace conference was called at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and a treaty was signed, humiliating for Russia as she had to renounce Manchuria and Korea, and cede to Japan Port Arthur, Dalny, and the southern half of the island of Sakhalin. The treaty had disastrous consequences for Europe, as Russia,

forcibly expelled from the Far East, turned her attention to the Balkans, the resulting complications providing a major cause of the war of 1914. The Japanese war had also far-reaching consequences within Russia, as it had been entered into largely to divert the attention of her down-trodden people from their sorry plight by the glories of foreign conquest. The defeat of Russia occasioned a short, sharp revolutionary outbreak which, although soon put down, compelled the Czar to grant a number of needed reforms, and also provided a forerunner of the larger revolution in 1917.

A number of international "incidents" took place between 1904 and 1911, which not only served to heighten the tension but also warned that even an event of minor importance in itself might have far-reaching consequences. The first of these occurred at Tangier, Morocco, in the spring of 1905. The Germans did not know the full terms of the Franco-British Entente of 1904, but suspected a good deal, and were particularly interested in those clauses dealing with Egypt and Morocco. Accordingly they were much irritated to see French influence spreading in the latter territory, and, apparently acting upon the advice of Holstein and Bülow, the Kaiser landed at Tangier on March 31 and made a speech which could only be

interpreted as meaning that Germany intended to safeguard the independence of Morocco. Germany, with Turkish support, demanded that a conference be held to settle the question. Delcassé assumed a belligerent attitude and refused, but when neither the French cabinet nor the British government supported him he was forced to resign. President Roosevelt succeeded in arranging a conference, and up to this point it appeared that France had suffered a major diplomatic setback.

The conference met at Algeciras in April 1906, and turned out to be mainly a diplomatic struggle between France and Germany. Germany tried to preserve the independence of Morocco, and succeeded in establishing the theoretical principle that Morocco concerned all the Powers equally. France however was backed openly by both Russia and Great Britain, and more or less secretly by the United States and Italy, and consequently the practical results of the conference were all in her favour. Not only did she divide with Spain commercial control over Morocco, but also she was able to retain a large measure of police control, from which Germany was excluded altogether. An important consequence of the Algeciras episode was that Great Britain and France began to discuss military co-operation, and another was that from this point on the chances of localizing a European conflict seemed extremely remote.

In July 1905 the Kaiser paid a surprise visit to the Russian Czar at Björko, a small island off the coast of Finland, and there persuaded the impressionable Russian monarch to sign what virtually amounted to an alliance between the two countries. The Kaiser went home delighted with the success of his diplomatic venture, but the Czar's advisers soon brought the latter monarch to his senses, and he was compelled to repudiate the treaty, on the quite reasonable grounds that it was not reconcilable with the Dual Alliance between France and Russia.

In 1908 occurred the first of the many serious crises in the Balkans during the twentieth century, when Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria suddenly proclaimed himself independent of Turkey, and Austria without warning annexed the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Russia was furious, and demanded not only a conference to discuss the question but also adequate compensation, preferably in the Straits. Great Britain supported the first demand but could not permit the second, France was unwilling to go to war in support of her ally, and with full knowledge of this disunity among the Entente Powers, and with solid German support behind her, Austria was able to make

good her annexation. Russia had not been appeased, however, and Serbia was enraged over the loss of a million Serbs to Austria. It was apparent that the Slavic nations would lose no opportunity to take revenge.

In 1911 the dispute over Morocco again reached fever pitch, when the German cruiser Panther was dispatched to Agadir, ostensibly to protect German interests there, but really to demonstrate that Germany considered the Act of Algeciras to be dead. Great Britain and France were both angered and alarmed, and for a time war seemed imminent, but Germany moderated her demands when she saw the impossibility of driving a wedge between her two rivals. A form of settlement was achieved when Germany gave France virtually a free hand in return for concessions in Central Africa.

A second Peace Conference was held at the Hague between June and October in 1907, and though some useful technical work was accomplished little or nothing was achieved in the limitation of armaments. Towards the end of the Conference Great Britain offered to keep naval armaments at their existing levels and promised that she would build no more warships if the other Powers would agre to do likewise, but Germany opposed this suggestion with vehemence and success. There was a general feeling that

the time was not opportune to discuss the reduction of armaments, and indeed the risk of war was so great that no Power could afford to chance sacrificing preparedness unless all others did likewise. No uniform agreement could be reached regarding the manner and extent of disarmament, and so the Conference in this respect was devoid of results.

What actually happened following the Conference was that all Powers rapidly increased their preparations. The launching of the first dreadnought by Great Britain in 1906 revolutionized naval warfare, and improvements in naval construction took place so rapidly that any warship tended to become obsolete after a few years. Germany launched a new and vastly more ambitious naval program in 1907, and Great Britain had to take similar measures to preserve the two to one ratio she considered so necessary. The German army, already the most efficient in the world, was added to at an astonishing rate, and her neighbors were compelled to resort to drastic measures to keep up with her. In 1905 a new French law raised army service from one year to two, and later the period was again raised to three years. Russia acquired another large loan from France early in 1906, part of which was used to increase her already large army and provide equipment for it. Citizens throughout Europe were subjected to crushing

burdens of taxation to provide for armaments, and with reluctance and fear were compelled to face the sorry prospect of either economic collapse or a conflagration which would engulf the whole continent.

C.Canadian External Relationships and Hansard (1904-1911)

The Naval Controversy

The question of naval defense had been considered in some form at every Colonial Conference after the first one in 1887. The original question of whether the colonies should make contributions to the Imperial Navy, had gradually changed. By about 1907 it had assumed the form, should there be only one navy within the Empire, controlled by Britain, or should each of the self-governing colonies have a navy of its own? In other words, as the international situation became increasingly grave, a majority of people in the colonies came to accept the principle that naval contributions were necessary, and the main point of argument was over the form they should take. Imperial authorities had favoured the single navy, but many colonial authorities were turning to the view that it would be preferable to have navies of their own. In 1909 both Houses in Canada passed a resolution stating that

Canada was willing to assume her proper share in naval defense. In 1910 the Canadian Naval Service Act was passed, making all necessary provisions for the development of a Canadian navy. The warships Niobe and Rainbow were purchased from Great Britain in the autumn of the same year to serve as training ships; one to be stationed at Halifax and the other at Esquimalt. The project had been begun with remarkable co-operation and oneness of opinion in the House, but before long divisions began to appear, reflecting the lack of unanimity which prevailed throughout the country. English-speaking Conservatives denounced Laurier's "tin-pot navy" as insignificant and useless, while Bourassa and his Quebec Nationalists objected to any scheme of naval construction or contribution Laurier succeeded in carrying his Bill through parliament, but the differences of opinion were not reconciled. The Naval controversy proved to be one of the main issues in the election of 1911, and provided the "unholy alliance" of Conservatives and Quebec nationalists with one of their main weapons to unseat the Government.

As the above summary would indicate, the debates in Hansard give a very thorough background to the naval controversy, and form a very reliable guide, since both the resolution of 1909 and the act of 1910 were

parliamentary measures.

The resolution of 1909, which was introduced by the Hon. George E. Foster, Conservative member for North Toronto, was worded as follows,

> "In the opinion of this House, in view of her great and varied resources, of her geographical position and national environments, and of that spirit of self-help and self-respect which alone befits a strong and growing people, Canada should no longer delay in assuming her proper share of the responsibility and financial burden incident to the suitable protection of her exposed coast-line and great seaports." [1]

After moving his resolution Foster defended it in a carefully-worded and moderate speech which seemed to meet with the approval of both sides of the House. He stressed the increasing gravity of the international situation and the growing need for Canada to take precautionary measures for her own protection, and also to assume an increasing share of Empire responsibilities. The following excerpt from his speech illustrates a consciousness of Canada's growing responsibility and vulnerability which was almost totally absent fifteen years earlier:

> "Sir, into this world of trouble, of uncertainty, amongst this world of nations, Canada has pushed forward to her place. She has taken a position which is important now, which will become more and more important as the years advance. Her ship of state is launched on the world's waters, it is open to every storm, it is exposed to every danger. She cannot escape the common burden, she cannot neglect the common duty, she cannot

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1909, vol. II, p.3484.

> escape the common burden, she cannot ignore the common responsibility."[1]

Laurier himself replied to Foster, and while heartily endorsing his opinion that some action in regard to Canada's naval deficiencies was imperative, criticized his motion on the grounds that it implied that Canada had previously neglected her Empire obligations, a point that Laurier refused to concede, and that the remedy it proposed was too indefinite to be of value. Laurier reiterated his views that the extent of Canadian contributions was a matter for the Canadian parliament to decide, and that in any case Canada should decline to make direct financial contributions to the Imperial navy, in favour of the policy of developing a small but efficient naval service under strictly Canadian control. At the end of his speech Laurier offered a motion of his own to replace that of Foster, the essential parts of which were as follows:

> "The House reaffirms the opinion, repeatedly expressed by representatives of Canada, that under the present constitutional relations between the mother country and the self-governing dominions the payment of any stated contribution to the imperial treasury for naval and military purposes would not, so far as Canada is concerned, be a satisfactory solution of the question of defence ....
>
> "The House will cordially approve of any necessary expenditure designed to promote the organization of a

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1909, vol. II, p. 3486.

> Canadian naval service in co-operation with and in close relation to the imperial navy ...." 1

Robert Borden took the floor next, and expressed agreement with Laurier's two main propositions as outlined above, but suggested that the first paragraph quoted above would be better left out, because if a sudden outbreak of hostilities occurred a financial contribution would be about the only form of naval assistance Canada could give. He also suggested the insertion of some word such as "immediate or "early" before the word "organization" in the second paragraph in order to indicate the intention to act promptly, and commented, as the others had done, on the fact that whereas Canada had made provisions for military expenditures for some time, and had in fact increased them greatly recently, nothing whatever had been done to provide for naval protection.

A number of other members spoke on the question, most of whom expressed agreement with the general principle that Canada should take some action in naval matters. One of the few dissenting voices was that of F.T. Congdon, representing the Yukon Territory, from whose speech a few scattered remarks have been quoted which illustrate his viewpoint clearly:

> "I believe that the best policy for us to pursue is the one we are now following and from which I see no reason for departing .... I do not think that there

---

1 Debates, House of Commons, 1909, vol.II, p.3511.

> is at present anything so critical in British relations as to cause us to get excited ....
>
> .... Why cannot a large nation like the British or the Canadian take a certain risk?" [1]

After reading Congdon's speech one is tempted to conclude that mentally he was as far removed from the current of world opinion as his constituency was geographically.

Ernest Roy, French Canadian member from Dorchester, endeavored to argue the question out in the calm light of reason, and while acknowledging Canada's debt to Great Britain, expressed the fear that Canada might become involved in all future wars of Britain, and that European nations might become angered and alarmed if the British colonies suddenly started building sizeable fleets. He said that he saw no danger of immediate conflict, and counselled deliberate rather than precipitate action, yet realized that the unanimous opinion of the House was that Canada should proceed to acquire a naval force.

After a number of other speakers had put forward their views, the motion of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, with the addition of the word "speedy" as proposed by Borden, was accepted by the House.

The Naval Bill was introduced in the following session, on January 10, 1910. The introduction of the bill

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1909, vol. II, pp. 5323-7.

was foreshadowed in the Speech from the Throne, and again by Laurier himself during the debate on the Throne Speech, when he commented on the fact that the unanimity of the previous session had disappeared, and that the government was now being violently upbraided by the opposition for its naval policy. Laurier quoted the enacting part of the resolution of the previous session, and continued as follows,

> "Sir, this resolution is clear cut. There is no ambiguity about it. It is as precise as words can make it. Parliament stands there unaminously committed to the policy that Canada shall organize a Canadian naval service, to act in co-operation with the British admiralty .... Yet the ink of that resolution was scarcely dry when we heard whisperings on the other side that the policy therein laid down did not altogether suit the party. These whisperings became murmurs, and the murmurs have now turned to ominous rumblings."[1]

From his succeeding remarks one gathers that Laurier gave credit to Borden and Foster for having until that time retained their previously expressed opinions, but felt aggrieved that a number of other opposition members, notably C.A. Magrath of Lethbridge, J. Herron of Macleod, and R. Lake of Qu'Appelle, who had voted for the resolution last session, were now volubly demanding direct naval contributions to Great Britain. Having dealt with the members who were too ardent, Laurier turned to

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1909-10, vol. I, pp. 43-4.

those whom he described as "stand-patters",[1] and severely criticized their preference for inaction, singling out F.D. Monk of Jacques Cartier in particular as one who was content to let sleeping dogs lie.

Laurier introduced the bill himself for the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, L. P. Brodeur, who was ill, and in a brief speech outlined its main provisions. It proposed the creation of a naval force composed of a permanent corps, a reserve force, and a volunteer force, under the control of the Department of Marine and Fisheries. A force of eleven warships was planned, some to be based on Esquimalt and some on Halifax, the total cost of construction to be approximately $11,000,000, and to be carried out in Canada if possible.

An interesting sidelight is provided by Laurier's answer to a question put by T. S. Sproule of Grey constituency, who wanted to know if the ships would be used for Canada's protection only or in wars which concerned the whole Empire. Laurier replied abruptly,

> "War everywhere. When Britain is at war, Canada is at war; there is no distinction. If Great Britain, to which we are subject, is at war with any nation, Canada becomes liable to invasion, and so Canada is at war."[2]

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1909-10, vol.I, pp. 47-

[2] " " " " 1909-10, vol.I, p. 1735.

Laurier's answer reveals his intense loyalty to the British connection, and his conception of the relationship of the various parts of the British Empire, especially during a crisis; a conception which some people find difficult to reconcile with his oft-expressed view that although Canada was automatically at war when Britain was at war, the extent of Canadian participation, if any, should be a matter for her Parliament to decide.

The introduction of the Navy Bill initiated what was probably one of the longest and most time-consuming debates in the history of the Canadian House of Commons, in the course of which most of the members expressed their views, some being extremely divergent. It was apparent that many of the members had private views which were quite different from those of their leaders, but in the final analysis enough loyalty was demonstrated to give a semblance of party unity. Borden as the leader of the Conservatives criticized the Bill on the grounds that it was inadequate, that it could not be instituted in a short enough time to make it worthwhile in case a crisis occurred, and that it endorsed the principle that Canada could reserve to herself the right to withhold her proposed navy from participation in Empire wars - a principle he abhorred.

When the question was boiled down to its essentials it became apparent that the Liberals supported Laurier in his proposal for a small but strictly Canadian navy, while the Conservatives stood behind Borden in demanding greater and more immediate action, which did not rule out the possibility of direct contribution to the Imperial treasury. When the debates finally ended and the question was put to a vote the Liberals emerged victorious with a majority of 111 to 70, and Laurier proceeded with his naval program.

Empire Conferences and the Development of Dominion Status.

As may be gathered from the discussion of the naval question, an increasing amount of interest was being taken by Canadians both in their status as a unit of the British Empire and in the degree of autonomy they possessed in their relations with the outside world. While there was not unity of opinion regarding the first question, of the Empire relationship, there was regarding the second, and most Canadians, irrespective of race, religion, or political affiliations, felt an increasing desire to do away with such limitations on Canadian autonomy as remained, The years between 1904 and 1911 witnessed a noteworthy development in Canada's status as a nation.

In 1907 Canada demonstrated her growing independence in the commercial field by arranging a separate commercial treaty with France, without British interference or assistance. A similar understanding with Italy followed in 1910, and conventions were also entered into with Holland and Belgium. In 1909 the growing importance of Canada's external relationships was recognized by the creation of a Department of External Affairs, which was to be combined with the Prime Minister's office.

Several important Empire conferences were held during the same years. A Colonial Conference was held in 1907, and the suggestion was put forward that the name of the meeting be changed to "Imperial Council", implying that in the future there would be a greater trend towards Empire centralization. Although some colonial representatives welcomed the proposal, Laurier stood firmly against it, fearing that if some centralized form of government for the whole Empire were adopted the Dominions would all be submerged under the much greater representation which would have to be accorded to Great Britain. However he did approve changing the one word "Colonial" to "Imperial" implying a greater degree of equality among Empire nations, and accordingly this change

was made. Largely as a result of Laurier's stand, the conferences were henceforth conducted more as being between equals than between an Imperial authority and a number of subordinate dominions.

A special naval conference was held in London in 1909, with representatives from all the principal colonies in attendance. The rapid deterioration of the international situation, and particularly the distrust of Germany's recently expanded naval program, made a re-orientation of Empire defense appear imperative. The discussion centred on the future course of naval policy throughout the countries of the Empire, both individually and collectively. Canadian representatives did not fall in with Great Britain's plans as whole-heartedly as Australia and New Zealand, but realized the gravity of the situation and the need for action. They carried this new understanding back home to the Canadian parliament and people, and an important outcome was the introduction of the Navy Bill in the House of Commons in 1910.

The Imperial Conference of 1911 met under similar circumstances and in much the same mood as that in 1907, except that an outbreak of hostilities appeared more imminent than previously. Sir Joseph Ward of New Zealand proposed not only an advisory Imperial Council of State,

but also an Imperial Parliament for the whole Empire. Both Canada and South Africa opposed the proposition vehemently, and even the British delegates criticized it severely. Needless to say it was not adopted. Another proposal, that Great Britain should inform and consult the Dominions about major international agreements, was adopted, and from this time on Dominion officials were generally better informed regarding important international events and negotiations. A plan was worked out providing for co-operation between Imperial and Dominion navies in case of war, and Canada and Australia both accepted certain oceanic areas as their responsibility in the protection of commerce.

Scattered through the pages of Hansard during these years are many brief references and several long debates on the questions of Imperial relationships, Empire Conferences, and Dominion status. In the session of 1905 Sam Hughes introduced a motion reading as follows:

> "That in the opinion of this House the best interests of Canada and the empire at large would be advanced, and the peace, progress and prosperity of humanity be assured, by a full partnership union of Great Britain and her colonies; wherein there would be a united Imperial parliament, empowered to deal with inter-imperial, international, commercial, financial and other necessary national problems; but leaving to the existing parliaments their present powers, functions, control of tariff, and other

matters necessary for their own purpose."[1]

Hughes was British to the core and a steady advocate of increased Empire unity and co-operation, being actuated, one might perhaps say, by motives similar to those which inspired Cecil Rhodes. He stated that his desire was only to bring the question before the House and publicize it throughout the country, and that he did not intend to divide the House on his motion. Consequently after a lengthy discussion, in which as usual a wide variety of opinions were expressed , the motion was withdrawn. In 1907 Hughes again introduced a similar motion and again withdrew it.

In March 1907 a rumor that the Prime Minister did not intend to go to the approaching Colonial Conference in London caused Borden to inquire in the House if the rumor were true. Laurier admitted that pressure of other business might compel him to cancel his trip and Borden thereupon moved that the House discuss "the urgent public importance that Canada shall be represented by the Prime Minister at the approaching conference between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the prime ministers of the self-governing colonies."[2]

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1905, vol. 70, p.2334

[2] Debates, House of Commons, 1906-7, vol.80, p.5260.

In a brief speech Borden outlined the reasons as he saw them which made Canadian representation imperative, and then said, "I would regret it as a most deplorable incident if Canada were not represented. It would in fact result in practically nullifying the work of the conference ....

I have said that the opposition were and are willing to facilitate the attendance of the Prime Minister at that conference; I think they have shown it ...." [1]

Whether Laurier had any motive other than pressure of business for not desiring to go to the Conference is not revealed, and the effect of Borden's motion is also doubtful, but the fact remains that Laurier was present at the 1907 Conference and exerted his usual powerful influence.

The bill which created the Department of External Affairs, introduced in the House during the session of 1909, occasioned a surprisingly small volume of discussion.[2] This is odd, to say the least, in view of the interest that was being shown at the same time in Imperial and other external relationships, and particularly in the naval question. One can only conclude that the members were in unusual harmony over this particular matter, and

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1906-7, vol.80,pp.5264-5
[2] " " " " 1909 vol.III,pp.4470-1

that the need for a department to look after external affairs was so widely accepted that there was little occasion for discussion or argument.

The Hague Tribunal (1910)

Attempts by Secretary Hay of the United States to arrange a fisheries settlement with Newfoundland had resulted in the Bond-Hay agreement of 1902. By 1904 it had become obvious that the United States Senate would not ratify it, and it was vetoed by the British Parliament also at Canada's request. In 1905 Newfoundland repealed the Foreign Fishing Vessels Act, and passed a new law forbidding Americans to hire local help in Newfoundland waters. The resulting confusion led Canada and the United States to discuss means of settling the entire fisheries question. In 1908 Elihu Root and James Bryce had agreed that henceforth outstanding differences between Great Britain and the United States should be submitted to arbitration at the Hague, and in line with this agreement it was decided in 1909 to submit the whole fisheries question to the Hague Tribunal.

The arbitration body was selected from the panel of the permanent court at the Hague, and consisted of a British Empire representative, Sir Charles Fitzpatrick, Chief Justice of Canada, an American, Judge George Grey, and

three other members, from Holland, Argentina, and Austria. The tribunal published the results of its investigation in September 1910.

The award was a compromise, and gave considerable satisfaction to both sides. Great Britain's right to regulate the fisheries was acknowledged, but it was stipulated that any such regulations must be in accordance with treaty provisions. If the United States should consider any regulation to be unreasonable or illegal, it had the right of appeal to a permanent mixed commission. Regarding the hiring of foreign employees by the Americans, the tribunal ingeniously decided that they might hire whom they pleased, but Great Britain could keep them from entering her waters if she wished. American fishing vessels were to report at customs houses if proper facilities were provided, and were also to pay light and harbor dues, provided that natives did also. The three mile limit was fixed so that all bays ten miles or less in diameter, and some larger bays also, were considered to be Canadian or Newfoundland territorial waters.

The success of the negotiations and the friendly spirit in which they were carried out were a great source of satisfaction to all four of the countries concerned, and reflect creditably upon the ability and conciliatory

attitude of the negotiators.

There appears to have been little discussion of the arbitration at the Hague prior to its conclusion, perhaps because the award was made public in September 1910, when Parliament was not in session. Complications arising after the publication of the decision caused a renewal of negotiations to take place privately between Canada and the United States, and these were described by the Minister of Justice, Sir Allen Aylesworth, in January 1911. He had been one of Canada's representatives at these discussions, held two weeks previously at Washington, and had just returned to Ottawa. The Americans had objected to four features of Canadian legislation which had remained after the Hague award had been announced, the prohibition of purse seining, the prohibition of Sunday fishing, the provisions for searching suspected foreign vessels, including American, and the system of issuing licenses which was still used by Canadian authorities. Aylesworth appeared to be quite pleased with the results of the negotiations, as the Canadian representatives had been able to preserve the first three of the four rights mentioned above, namely, to prohibit purse seining and Sunday fishing, and to retain the right of search. To accommodate

American fishermen the licensing system was modified in several details, so that it became less burdensome.[1]

The above discussion attempts to deal with the salient features of Canada's external relationships between 1904 and 1911. Not all aspects have been discussed in detail, but perhaps enough has been said to indicate the trends in Canadian thought respecting world affairs during this period. It is apparent that Canadians were developing a sense of international consciousness and even responsibility; also that Canada's position in the world, particularly with regard to the Imperial connection should Great Britain become involved in a war, occasioned more thought than at any time previously. The Members of Parliament were not as yet however discussing international affairs in the larger sense to any great extent, except insofar as they directly affected Canada, either alone or as a unit of the British Empire, by threatening her with involvement in a war not of her own choosing.

---

[1] See Debates, House of Commons, 1910-11, vol.II, pp. 1988-2003

CHAPTER VII

FROM THE ACCESSION OF BORDEN TO THE OUTBREAK OF WAR (1911-1914)

A. Canadian Affairs 1911-1914

Robert Laird Borden, who was swept into power by the Conservative landslide in 1911, assumed office at a time when the eyes of Canadians were being forcibly turned abroad by the ominous situation in Europe. Although an increasing amount of attention had to be paid to external problems, the first three years of Borden's regime were by no means devoid of results at home. One of the most important steps taken by his government was the enlargement of the three provinces of Quebec, Ontario, and Manitoba to their present size, so that only the northern islands and that part of the mainland lying west of Hudson's Bay and north of the 60th parallel remained as territories. In 1913 a Bank Act was passed, which made improvements in the Canadian system of banking and gave greater security to depositors. Steamship and mail services both within and without Canada were greatly extended and improved, and railway facilities were enlarged, the National Transcontinental

being completed with government aid. Large terminal elevators were built in the West, to facilitate the marketing of grain and to provide increased storage space. An act provided for government aid in agricultural instruction, and efforts were made to encourage the conservation of natural resources. There was a great deal of agitation in favour of woman's suffrage, and the federal government was urged to take action, but Borden steadily refused, holding that the electoral franchise was a matter to be settled by the provinces.

Borden, like Laurier, had to face problems in party and government control, and found these problems difficult to handle, as he lacked Laurier's charm of manner and gift of leadership. He was intelligent and well-educated, the holder of several university degrees, and a constitutional expert of some distinction, but not an outstanding leader of men, and had won his position mainly through honest effort and dogged perseverance. The composition of his ministry was a possible source of future trouble, as it was formed from the "unholy alliance" of Quebec anti-Imperialists and die-hard Ontario Conservatives, and included such widely divergent personalities as the fiery Imperialist Colonel Sam Hughes, the Minister of Militia, and the arch-

isolationist F.D. Monk. There were few men of distinction in the cabinet, with the possible exception of George E. Foster, a tried and true supporter who became Minister of Trade and Commerce. Borden perhaps deserves credit for preventing cabinet dissension from causing more trouble than it actually did, although he had to accept the resignation of Monk in 1912, who wanted a referendum on the government's naval policy and left the cabinet when his colleagues did not agree with him.

Borden was perhaps unwise in conducting extensive inquiries into the activities of the previous administration, in the hope of discovering evidence of scandal and inefficiency. The evidence was not difficult to find, but Borden's own administration was not infallible, and it was not long before the Liberals were able to counter with similar charges of wrong-doing. Accusations of maladministration, jobbery, and "pork-barrel" legislation were hurled freely from one side to the other in Parliament, and the only cause the House had for congratulating itself was that apparently anything suggestive of scandal was being given a good airing.

Borden's domestic policy did not differ widely from that of Laurier in most essentials. Having been elected on a platform which refused to accept reciprocity with the United States, he was forced to reconsider the question in 1913, when the boom that had marked the Liberal era collapsed suddenly, and a depression set in which made a reciprocity arrangement with the United States again seem desirable.

All domestic issues had to be shelved, to meet the crisis caused by the onset of war in the summer of 1914. In the struggle and bloodshed which followed all other problems were subordinated to the all-important ones of providing for war needs and aiding the allies in the defeat of the enemy. The war initiated a number of changes of the most sweeping and fundamental nature, which profoundly altered Canada's status as a nation, both within the Empire and in relation to the outside world. Some of those developments have not yet been completed, and it is impossible to foretell with any accuracy what the future holds in store. The year 1914 therefore marks in many ways the end of one era in Canadian history, both internal and external, and the beginning of another.

B. The International Scene 1911-1914

This period was marked by steadily increasing tension throughout Europe, and particularly in the Balkans, where crisis followed crisis in rapid succession until the outbreak of the major conflict in the summer of 1914. All attempts to restore an atmosphere of sanity and moderation in international discussion and to halt the steadily onrushing flood of armament construction, proved to be useless. Lord Haldane was sent to Berlin on an unofficial peace mission in the early months of 1912, but although he was on good terms with the Kaiser and the discussions were conducted in a friendly spirit nothing was accomplished, either in limitation of armaments or in the arrangement of a naval ratio. As a last resort Winston Churchill, speaking as First Lord of the Admiralty, proposed a one year holiday in naval construction, but Germany distrusted British motives, and nothing came of the suggestion. Land preparations proceeded apace, particularly in France, Germany, and Russia, and an alarming feature of their great effort in army organization was that the two former nations were coming to the end of their manpower reserves, while the latter was approaching the limit of its financial capacity. This made it probable, or at least possible, that any of the three Powers might gamble on a

sudden onslaught when it considered that it had carried its preparations to the limit of its ability. Another factor which threatened to cause an early outbreak was that German strategists were known to believe that time favoured the Entente Powers, particularly slow-moving Russia, and so advocated a sudden attack before the Entente could realize its full strength.

The storm centre of Europe during 1912 and 1913 was the Balkans. The First Balkan War broke out in October 1912, with Servia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Montenegro arrayed against Turkey. An immediate consequence of the war was that Turkey was compelled to sign the Peace of Lausanne with Italy, thereby recognizing her occupation of Tripoli, carried out during the previous year. The Great Powers had tried to prevent the outbreak of war in the Balkans, not wishing the status quo to be altered, as would no doubt happen if the Balkan League should be victorious. The general feeling however was that the Powers would have to interfere to limit the power of an aggrandized Turkey, and great was the surprise when the Balkan nations won a speedy victory. After an uneasy truce hostilities were resumed on February 3, 1913, and in a short time the destruction of Turkish resistance was completed. War

threatened to break out between the Great Powers, because Austria was supporting the Turks and Russia the Serbs, but neither was anxious to fight over this issue. Realizing this reluctance, the members of the Balkan League adopted a high-handed attitude. They signed the Treaty of London, which was arranged by the Great Powers, on May 30, but immediately disregarded it afterwards. Bulgaria felt especially aggrieved at the settlement, which actually had favoured Greece and Serbia, and attacked both of her neighbours simultaneously, thus initiating the Second Balkan War. Rumania came to the aid of Greece and Serbia, and Turkey naturally availed herself of the opportunity to obtain compensation for her recent defeat, by attacking Bulgaria. The latter country's resistance soon collapsed, and she was compelled to sign the Treaty of Bucharest, in August 1913, giving important concessions to all of Greece, Serbia, Rumania, and Turkey. None of the nations concerned looked on the settlement as being permanent, and all continued preparations for another conflict in the near future. The defeated Bulgars made friendly overtures to both Austria and Turkey, Serbia drew still closer to Russia, and Rumania and Greece hovered uncertainly between one side and the other. The stage was set for the larger conflict which was to follow.

The larger Powers also took steps to reassure themselves that they would not have to stand alone in the event of conflict. The Triple Alliance was reaffirmed in March 1914, although by this time both Germany and Austria had serious misgivings about the attitude of Italy and the prospects of that nation rendering any active assistance. An exchange of letters between Grey and Cambon in 1912 resulted in an informal naval convention, and France transferred her North Atlantic fleet to the Mediterranean, leaving her North Sea coast to be defended by units of the British fleet which were moved from the Mediterranean to the North Sea. Efforts were also made to strengthen the British-Russian agreement, and naval conversations between those two nations took place in 1912.

The spark which finally set fire to the powder magazine was lit in the Balkans on June 28, 1914, when the heir to the Austrian throne, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was assassinated at Sarajevo by a Serbian patriot. The Austrian government, which had apparently decided that the time was ripe for a settlement with the Serbs, and relying on the German blank check for support, presented Serbia with a list of demands so harsh as to be almost impossible of fulfilment. Serbia adopted a

surprisingly conciliatory attitude, and appealed to the Powers for mediation. Both Great Britain and Germany attempted to play the role of peace-makers, but after Austria had sent Serbia a harsh ultimatum on July 23, with a time limit of only 48 hours, hopes for a peaceful settlement rapidly faded. Austria declared war on Serbia on July 28, and mobilization of the Powers proceeded amid frantic last-minute attempts to avert a general conflict. Germany declared war on Russia on the afternoon of August 1, after a twelve hour ultimatum to cease mobilization had expired, and attacked both France and Belgium on August 4, At midnight of the same day, true to her obligations to Belgium, Great Britain entered the war at the side of her allies. Armageddon had begun.

C. Canadian External Relationships and Hansard 1911-1914

Borden's Naval Program

When Borden assumed office he showed no eagerness to enact any naval legislation, and his government did nothing to put Laurier's program into effect. Speaking during the debate on the Speech from the Throne, Laurier pointed out that the naval question had not been

mentioned, recalled the resolution which had been passed in 1909 approving the speedy organization of a Canadian naval service, and then, after remarking that Borden while in opposition had taken the Liberal government to task on the grounds that its program was inadequate, proceeded to criticize him for inaction and neglect of duty. Having commented with great sarcasm on the odd combination of Quebec Nationalists and Conservative Imperialists who made up Borden's administration, Laurier proceeded to move the following resolution:

> "That the following words be added to the address:
>
> We beg to represent to your Royal Highness that by resolution of this House, adopted the 31st of March, 1909, it was affirmed that:
>
> This House fully recognizes the duty of the people of Canada, as they increase in numbers and wealth, to assume in larger measure the responsibilities of national defence.
>
> And further:
>
> This House will cordially approve of any necessary expenditure designed to promote the speedy organization of a Canadian naval service.
>
> That in pursuance of that resolution the late administration proceeded to adopt a well-defined policy of naval organization.
>
> That with regard to that policy, as well as to the whole question of naval defence, there is in the present cabinet a flagrant conflict of opinion, and that some of its members have repeatedly, both before and during the last elections, denounced naval service in any form whatsoever.
>
> We respectfully submit to your Royal Highness that ... the inclusion, by the Prime Minister, in the present cabinet, of members holding diametrically

> opposite views on a question of the highest importance to the Dominion and to the Empire, is contrary to the well understood principles of responsible government and should not receive the approval of the House."[1]

Borden countered with a direct and extremely hard-hitting reply, in which he answered Laurier's accusations with telling effect. In reference to naval policy he quoted the following passage from one of his recent election speeches:

> "Since the last general election the government (i.e. Liberal government) has entered upon a new line of policy in regard to naval affairs, which is of far-reaching importance. The policy adopted was not debated before the people during the election, and it bears all the earmarks of a hasty and ill-considered scheme. In my judgment our duty to the empire cannot be properly or effectively fulfilled by such a measure. I hold that the plan of the government contemplates the creation of a naval force that will be absolutely useless in time of war, and therefore of no practical benefit to Canada or to the Empire. It will cost immense sums of money to build, equip, and maintain. It will probably result in time of war in the useless sacrifice of many valuable lives, and it will not add one iota to the fighting strength of the empire. The more it is considered, the more does it become evident that the whole naval plan of the government is an unfortunate blunder."[2]

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1911-12, vol.1,pp.49-50.
[2] " " " " 1911-12, vol.1, p.59.

After this quotation Borden continued to criticize the naval policy of the preceding administration, but although he promised to take the whole matter into consideration at some later date he gave no indication as to what his own policy in naval affairs was to be. As time went on and nothing was done curiosity respecting government naval policy grew, and it was suspected that the administration had abandoned the idea of a separate Canadian navy. A certain measure of enlightenment was obtained on March 4, 1912, when A.A. Mondou of Yamaska asked in the House:

> "Does the government intend to propose the repeal of the Naval Service Act?
>
> If so, does the government intend, in case of such repeal, to propose another Act containing the policy of the government in the matter?
>
> If such other Act is proposed, is it the intention of the government to submit the same for the approval of the people before being put into force?"[1]

John D. Hazen, the new Minister of Marine, Fisheries and Naval Service, replied as follows:

> "The answer to each of these three questions is 'Yes'. After such consideration and inquiry as may be necessary, the government will present its naval policy to parliament and the people. That policy will undoubtedly require legislation which will involve the repeal of the present Naval Service Act. In the meantime that Act will remain on the

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1911-12, vol.iii,p.4242.

> statute-book for purposes in connection with the Fishery Protection Service and otherwise. Before any permanent naval policy is put into force, the people will be given an opportunity to pronounce upon it."[1]

In the summer of 1912 Borden went on a visit to England. From the statement in his Memoirs that "The necessity of reaching a decision with respect to naval co-operation with Great Britain made the visit not only desirable but necessary,"[2] there can be little doubt that the naval problem and the tense international situation were the prime moving factors in the visit. While in England he had many intimate conversations with prominent British government officials, including Mr. Asquith and Winston Churchill, who freely communicated their worries to him and told him that the best contribution Canada could make to Great Britain would be some of "the largest and strongest ships of war which science can build or money supply." The huge German naval bill of 1912 had caused Great Britain much additional concern, and being continually reminded of the sizable contributions which Australia, New Zealand, and even the

---

1 Debates, House of Commons, 1911-12, vol.iii,p.4242.
2 Robert L. Borden: "Memoirs", vol.i, p.355.

Federated Malay States were offering the Mother Country, it is not surprising that Borden returned home firmly in support of the proposal that Canada should make direct contributions to the British fleet.

On October 14, Borden presented to Council a draft of the Naval Aid Bill which he proposed to introduce into parliament during the coming session. All members voiced unanimous approval with the exception of Monk, who resigned on October 18 and died a few months later. Before introducing his Bill into parliament Borden gave Laurier a copy of a memorandum from the British Admiralty, couched in terms stressing the likelihood of war and the need of help from Canada. He hoped by so doing to obtain a measure of support from the Liberals, or at least of non-resistance, but it soon became apparent that his efforts were useless. On December 3 Mondou proposed a motion to the effect that so long as the people of the United Kingdom retained exclusive control of foreign policy, the Canadian Government had no right to impose responsibilities of defense on the Canadian people. The amendment was defeated by a majority of 183 to 4 and it was apparent that as in Laurier's regime the dispute was not going to be over the principle of contribution to Empire defense but over the form it should take.

Borden introduced his Navy Bill on December 5 to a packed House, the galleries of which were filled with spectators, many of whom had come from all parts of the country to hear the proposals. He gave the House a summary of proceedings during his visit to Great Britain in the previous summer, read the memorandum from the British Admiralty, outlined his own views on the seriousness of the naval and international situations, and then informed the members of his proposal, to appropriate $35,000,000 to the British Government, for the construction of three of the largest type of battleships. He stressed that although these ships were to be maintained and controlled by the Imperial authorities, they would be subject to recall, after due notice had been given, by the Canadian government, if it should ever be desired to establish a Canadian unit of the Royal navy. He also repeated Laurier's principle that the Canadian contribution was not to be interpreted as providing a precedent for future action, and stated that although the ships were to be built in Great Britain, since necessary facilities for their construction did not exist in Canada, the Admiralty were nevertheless prepared to place orders in Canada for the construction of small cruisers and auxiliary craft.

A few excerpts may help to illustrate the tone and content of Borden's speech, undoubtedly one of the most important pronouncements on Canadian foreign policy that has ever been uttered by a Canadian statesman:

> "The evolution of the constitutional relations within the Empire during the past half century has been not less marked than its material progress. In this constitutional development, we are necessarily confronted with the problem of combining co-operation with autonomy. It seems most essential that there should be such co-operation in defence and in trade as will give to the whole Empire an effective organization in these matters of vital concern. On the other hand, each dominion must preserve in all important respects the autonomous government which it now possesses .... During my recent visit to the British islands, I ventured on many public occasions to propound the principle that the great dominions, sharing in the defence of the Empire upon the high seas, must necessarily be entitled to share also in the responsibility for and in the control of foreign policy. No declaration that I made was greeted more heartily and enthusiastically than this....
>
> .... This Empire is not a great military power, and it has based its security in the past as in the present almost entirely on the strength of the navy. A crushing defeat upon the high seas would render the British islands or any of the dominions subject to invasion by any great military power. The loss of such a decisive battle by Great Britain would practically destroy the United Kingdom, shatter the British Empire to its foundation, and change profoundly the destiny of its component parts. The advantages which Great Britain could gain from defeating the naval forces of any other power would be non-existent except in so far as the result would insure the safety of the Empire. On the other hand, there are practically no limits to the ambitions which might be indulged in by other powers if the British navy were once destroyed or disabled....

> .... Almost unaided, the motherland, not for herself alone, but for us as well, is sustaining the burden of a vital Imperial duty, and confronting an overmastering necessity of national existence. Bringing the best assistance that we may in the urgency of the moment, we come thus to her aid, in token of our determination to protect and ensure the safety and integrity of this Empire, and of our resolve to defend on sea as well as on land our flag, our honor, and our heritage."[1]

Borden's speech was greeted by tremendous applause; and both the House and the gallery in a great demonstration of loyalty rose to their feet and sang the national anthem.

The Bill was read for the first time in the House a week later, on December 12, and Laurier rose to reply before a packed gallery. With all his well-known eloquence he protested that he approached the problem in the same non-controversial spirit and with the same worthy motives as the Prime Minister, and differed with him only because he sincerely felt that his policy was more conducive to the welfare of Canada and more acceptable to its people, than that of the Government. He said in part:

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1912-13, vol.i,pp.676-693.

> ..."I ask once more, what is the remedy? In our humble judgment, the remedy is this, that whereever, in the distant seas, or in the distant countries - in Australia, Canada or elsewhere - a British ship has been removed to allow of concentration in European waters, that ship should be replaced by a ship built, maintained, equipped and manned by the young nation immediately concerned.... This is the Australian policy, this ought to be the Canadian policy....
>
> ....When England is at war, we are at war, and the thought of being neutral would be like the command of King Canute to the sea to recede from his feet. No action of ours could bring that about. When England is at war, we are at war; but it does not follow that because we are at war, we are actually in the conflict.... We can be in the conflict only through two things, namely, actual invasion of our soil, or the action of the Parliament of Canada."[1]

Laurier concluded by moving that the Liberal program be proceeded with, of establishing two Canadian fleet units, to be based on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of Canada, rather than adopting Borden's policy of direct naval contributions, and sat down amidst prolonged applause from Liberal members and spectators.

Thus the Liberal and Conservative naval policies were both clearly defined in the speeches of the party

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1912-13, vol.i,pp.1022-1029.

leaders, Laurier's being the one to which he had consistently adhered for many years, and Borden's being one to which he had recently been converted, especially during and since his visit to England. Other members followed their leaders in the debate, which lasted until parliament adjourned for the Christmas recess on December 18, and resumed after Parliament opened again on January 14, 1913. It continued with unabated vigour until February 13, when a vote was taken on the various amendments which had been proposed, and the chief one, that proposed by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, was defeated by a majority of 47 votes. A vote was then taken upon Borden's motion to set aside $35,000,000 for the construction of three battleships for the Imperial navy, and it was carried, although there were a few defections from the Conservative ranks by Quebec members. The resolution was then referred to the Committee of the Whole.

In the Committee of the Whole a hard-fought and long drawn out battle began, which finally became so intense that in March the House remained in continuous session for nearly two weeks. The Liberals resorted to various obstructionist tactics, and it became obvious that they hoped to delay passage of the Bill and force the government to go to the country on the naval issue.

The debate grew more acrimonious, with threats of violence on both sides of the House, and members consumed time by reading long passages about the Navy Bill from previous debates and from the newspapers. Borden finally resorted to the closure rule, in order to get the Bill through the House, and it passed the third reading on May 15, by a majority of 101 to 68, in the face of the opposition of Bourassa, who favoured neither Liberal nor Conservative program, the Liberals under Laurier, and five nominally Conservative supporters from Quebec, who refused to vote for Borden on this issue.[1]

The Bill now went to the Senate, where it encountered strong opposition which the Conservatives could do little to overcome. The Senate was predominantly Liberal as a result of Laurier's long control over appointments to that body, and under his influence, mainly exerted behind the scenes, and under the leadership of the Liberal Sir George Ross, enough strength was gathered to defeat the Bill. It was sent back to the Commons on May 30 with the message that the Senate felt that it could not give its assent to the Bill until it had been submitted to the judgment of the country.

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1912-13, vol.v,pp.10061-3.

After such a long struggle it might be expected that Borden would have been keenly disappointed that the Senate should take it upon itself to nullify his efforts of the past few months, and there was indeed some talk of curbing the power of the upper body as had recently been done in Great Britain. Perhaps his disappointment was not so keen as might have been thought however, as the long struggle in the House had shown that a very contentious issue was involved, which with a little misfortune might easily wreck the government if it had to carry its policy to the country. In answer to a question put by Laurier on June 6, the day of prorogation, Borden gave the somewhat surprising information that the government expected to buy the three ships eventually, which Great Britain planned to build in substitution for those which Canada would have provided had the Bill become law.[1] Nevertheless he took no steps between that date and the outbreak of war either to revive the issue or to attempt to compel the Senate to accept the Government's program, and it appears that he was satisfied to let the matter drop for the time being. The tension

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1912-13,vol.vi,p.12142.

in Europe relaxed a little after the Balkan Wars ended in 1913, and perhaps there is much truth in Lower's remark that "The thoughts of all North Americans, Canadians included, were far away from the old world when the news of the assassination at Sarajevo came out,"[1] implying the nation at large, as well as the Government, was able to forget the issue with little difficulty - a circumstance bearing eloquent testimony to Canada's traditional isolationism.

Canadian Trade Relations

While the debates on the Naval Bill overshadow in importance all other matters dealing with external affairs, there are certain other aspects of Canadian external relationships which should be given brief consideration. One of these is the matter of Canadian trade relationships immediately before the war. The opportunity of securing a reciprocity treaty with the United States had been rejected by the electorate in 1911, and since Borden depended on this rejection for his accession to power he made no serious attempt to renew reciprocity

[1] A.R.M. Lower: "Colony to Nation", p.452.

discussions, although the depression in 1913 forced his government to consider whether such a move would not be advantageous both to the party and to the country. However as far as the debates in the Commons are concerned the issue of reciprocity with the United States became largely a dead issue, and only passing references were made to it between 1911 and 1914.

On the other hand the question of trade with Japan was dealt with in some detail. Canadian relations with Japan were very cordial, perhaps owing to the British-Japanese alliance of 1902 and the trade treaty which had been arranged between the two countries in 1911, and a movement began to attempt to establish closer trade relations between Canada and Japan. In March 1913 Borden moved "that a treaty signed at London on the 3rd day of April, A.D. 1911, between His Majesty the King and His Majesty the Emperor of Japan be sanctioned and declared to have the force of law in Canada...."[1]

After a lengthy debate in which many members expressed the cordial feelings of Canadians towards the Japanese the motion was passed.

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1912-13, p.6497.

In the same session the question of Canadian trade relations with the West Indies was brought up and thoroughly discussed, and George Foster, the Minister of Trade and Commerce, attended a Conference in the West Indies. He brought back with him a treaty providing for preferential rates of 20% for certain goods exchanged between Canada and the British West Indies, which was adopted by the House of Commons after prolonged discussion.

While these two trade arrangements received the greatest amount of attention in the Commons, there were frequent references to trade relationships with other nations, notably Great Britain, Australia, and France, and one can only draw the rather obvious conclusion that while the Borden government did not endorse the principles of low tariffs and free trade it was still opportunist enough to seize a favorable trade arrangement when it could be secured.

Immigration

Canadian opposition to Chinese immigration, discussed in an earlier chapter, had remained strong, in fact had increased as the Chinese population on the Pacific Coast increased and the need for it in railway

construction diminished. Acts restricting Chinese immigration were passed with great regularity after the first ones were enacted in the 1880's, and Chinese immigration dwindled to a low ebb. The objection to Japanese immigration was not so severe at first, especially during the early years of the British-Japanese Alliance and at the time of the Russo-Japanese war, when Canadian public opinion rejoiced at the sight of Britain's old enemy receiving a thorough beating. The situation changed rapidly after Japanese began to arrive in large numbers in British Columbia and in 1907 Rodolphe Lemieux and Mackenzie King went to Japan to negotiate a settlement of the problem. The result was the famous "Gentleman's Agreement", whereby the Japanese government agreed to limit the number of its emigrants to Canada to no more than four hundred annually. Thus the Canadian government attained its essential object without dispute or difficulty, and, it is worth noting, without any assistance or interference from the British government. The Canadian endorsement in 1913 of the British trade treaty with Japan was specifically stated not to be construed as interfering with Canada's right to limit Japanese immigration. At the conclusion of his speech introducing the motion to

sanction the British-Japanese trade treaty Borden referred to the immigration problem in the following words:

> ".... The Conservative party of today ...are absolutely true to the policy that we enunciated in 1907, namely, the policy that the Government and Parliament of Canada should keep in their own hands and within their own power the control of immigration from Japan or from any other country in the world.... It is absolutely consistent with that policy that we shall do what we propose to do, namely to give consideration to this question in the light of the cordial and friendly relations that exist between the great Empire of Japan and the Empire of which we form a part and to deal in a cordial, just, and friendly spirit with any difficulties if they should arise in the future."[1]

Although Oriental immigration was frowned on to such an extent, Laurier's policy of encouraging Occidental immigration by all possible means was continued, and it was a source of continued satisfaction to the Government of Robert Borden as it had been to that of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, that emigration to the United States had sunk to a level far below that which had prevailed during the first three decades after Confederation.

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1912-13, vol.iv,p.7203.

The Canadian Peace Centenary Association

Much has been said in the last two chapters about Canadian discussion of preparations for war and of the likelihood that Canada would soon find herself engaged in a war in support of Great Britain. Yet interspersed among all the speeches dealing with international disputes and problems are to be found eloquent expressions of hope that the threatening world conflict could be averted, and there is no doubt whatever that the overwhelming desire of Canadians, expressed by their representatives in parliament, was that some means of preserving a peaceful state throughout the world could be secured. Speaking in reference to the work of the Canadian Peace Centenary Association in the House on February 20, 1914, Borden doubtless was voicing the sentiments of all Canadians when he said:

> "The cause which the Canadian Peace Centenary Association and the corresponding bodies in the United Kingdom and the United States have set before them is one with which we are warmly sympathetic. It is a triumph of humanity that during a century of rapid development, despite the existence of serious international differences and problems, the British Empire and the United States have found wiser and more humane methods of adjusting differences than the arbitrament of war. We welcome the achievement of a century of peace, and hope that it will prove

to be but the first century of peace, the forerunner of a long series stretching into the future as far as human anticipation can trust itself."[1]

---

[1] Debates, House of Commons, 1914, vol.i, p.970.

CONCLUSION

In summary, one may begin with the general statement that it is not easy to identify a Canadian attitude to international affairs between 1867 and 1914. This is particularly true when Hansard is used as the main source, because, as has been pointed out previously, the debates of the House of Commons often show in very incomplete measure the opinion prevalent throughout the country, and also because parliament is essentially a house of divided opinions. It is also especially true of the early period after Confederation, when Canada's control of her foreign affairs was so much more incomplete than in recent years, and when most of the emphasis, both in parliament and throughout the country, was being placed on interior consolidation and development.

Who or what were the authorities that actually controlled Canadian foreign policies and relationships between 1867 and 1914? To carry the question a little further, can it be said with accuracy that any truly Canadian foreign policies were in existence during most, if not all, of these years? These are both pertinent questions, and must be answered before this work can be

satisfactorily concluded.

Regarding the first, it seems obvious that although the Imperial government had nominal control of Canadian external relations during the early years of the period under discussion, in reality control was divided between the Imperial authorities and the Canadian government, in a manner so indefinite as to be impossible of definition. Foreign nations regarded the Imperial government as the proper authority to deal with in any discussions or negotiations involving the colonies, and yet it would obviously have been impossible, even as early as 1867, for the British government to disregard completely the clearly expressed wishes of the Canadian government and people. The only result would have been a speedy termination of the Empire connection, and probably annexation by the United States soon afterwards. It also seems obvious that, while there was little formal definition of spheres of authority between 1867 and 1914, there was actually a very real growth in Canadian control over her external affairs, so that by 1914 she was insisting upon, and achieving, a very substantial degree of autonomy. This growth was slow, gradual, and almost imperceptible, and at no time was there a sharp break with the conditions prevailing in

the immediate past. There was however considerable evidence of this development, for example the increasing participation of Canadian authorities in boundary and other discussions with the United States, the steady growth of commercial autonomy, illustrated by the negotiation of independent trade treaties with such nations as France, and the gradual withdrawal of British army and naval forces from Canadian territory and Canadian waters.

In answer to the second question, it is also evident that although Canadian public opinion on certain aspects of foreign relationships was at times clearly defined, there was actually no genuine Canadian foreign policy between 1867 and 1914. This might be expected, considering the preoccupation with internal affairs which characterized almost the entire period. It would seem self-evident that a necessary pre-requisite to an effective foreign policy in a country is full control over its own external affairs, and since this existed in Canada in only a partial, though increasing, degree, a hazy and uncertain outlook towards the rest of the world can be expected as a natural consequence.

This was indeed the case, and one of the most outstanding characteristics of the Canadian attitude to

world affairs between Confederation and the outbreak of the first Great War was its indefiniteness and uncertainty. Ample evidence of this can be cited; for example there was a strong difference of opinion in regard to what were perhaps the three greatest foreign issues confronting Canada between 1867 and 1914 - the question of reciprocity with the United States, that of participation in the Boer War, and the European problem, which for Canada seemed to revolve around the naval policies of the Laurier and Borden governments.

Another fact which clearly emerges from a study of Hansard is that in many important issues Canada is often a house divided. The reasons are deeply rooted and, up to the present at least, apparently irremovable - the existence of two racial groups with different languages, religions, cultures, and traditions, the concentration of most of the country's wealth and industry in a small area in the St. Lawrence lowlands, and the vast distances and great natural barriers, which tend to separate our people mentally as well as geographically.

A third fact which emerges is that Canadian interest in external affairs increased substantially between 1867 and 1914, if one may consider Hansard to be a guide. During the years immediately following

Confederation there was little discussion of external matters, and one might judge after reading the debates that Canada lived in a world almost by herself. The situation had completely changed by 1914, to such an extent that in the year when Borden's naval bill was introduced there was perhaps more discussion on this and related topics than all others combined. While this growth appears to have been gradual, the South African War marked a definite turning point, and apparently did much to stimulate Canadian interest in international affairs. This rising interest coincided with the growth of Canadian autonomy, and one is led to the rather superficial conclusion that the first depends in large measure upon the second.

Another noteworthy feature is that although interest in international affairs increased greatly, Canada remained essentially a non-militaristic nation. Military expenditures increased considerably during the period, but in comparison with European Powers Canada by her own choice remained practically unarmed. This situation was the direct result of the desire to remain aloof from the complications of the outside world, particularly to avoid commitments with European entanglements. Canada has been isolationist throughout most of her

history, although there appears to have been a trend away from that tendency between 1899 and 1914. It is perhaps not too much to say that Canada was less isolationist between 1899 and 1914 than between 1918 and 1939.

A fifth conclusion that one may draw is that Canada's voice in international relationships, and probably her attitude towards them also, were greatly affected by the influence of several dominant personalities, particularly Prime Ministers Macdonald, Laurier, and Borden. Their influence spans the entire period, and each, in a very real sense, may be considered the voice of his era.

Lastly, one is led to the inescapable conclusion that two of the greatest factors influencing Canadian public opinion have been the United States and Great Britain. Most of our citizens have come to us from either one or the other, we are intimately connected with them by economic, racial, and social ties, and it is a matter of sheer self-interest that we preserve good relations with both. It is impossible for a country to escape the influences of geography and heredity. As long as the United States continues to

exist, single, strong, and united, on our southern boundary, and as long as we remain a unit of the British Commonwealth, our future is irrevocably bound up with, and in a sense dependent on, these two great nations.

Bibliography

A. Debates, Canadian House of Commons, 1870-1872.

" " " " " , 1875-1914.

B. References dealing with Canadian History:

Borden, R.L., Memoirs(vol.1)Toronto, The MacMillan Co., 1938.

Boyd, John, Sir George Etienne Cartier, Bart., Toronto, The MacMillan Co., 1914.

Brebner, J.B., North Atlantic Triangle, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1945.

Bryce, George, A Short History of the Canadian People, Toronto, William Briggs, 1914.

Buckingham, W., and Ross, Hon. G.W., The Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, His Life and Times, Toronto, Rose Publishing Co., 1892.

Cambridge History of the British Empire,(vol.vi), Cambridge, University Press, 1930.

Canada and Its Provinces,(vols.vi and vii), Glasgow, Brook and Co., 1914.

Clokie, H.M., Canadian Government and Politics, Toronto, Longmans, Green and Co., 1946.

Cartwright, R.J., Reminiscences, Toronto, William Briggs, 1912.

Dafoe, J.W., Laurier, A Study in Canadian Politics, Toronto, Thomas Allen, 1922.

Dafoe, J.W., Clifford Sifton, in Relation to His Times, Toronto, The MacMillan Co., 1931.

Dawson, R.M., The Development of Dominion Status, 1900-1936, London, Oxford University Press, 1937.

Denison, Col. G.T., The Struggle for Imperial Unity, London, MacMillan and Co., 1909.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 14th ed., New York, 1929.

Glazebrook, G.P.deT., Canadian External Relations to 1914, Toronto, Oxford Press, 1942.

Keenleyside, H.L., Canada and the United States, New York, A.A. Knopf, Inc., 1929.

Lower, A.R.M., Colony to Nation, Toronto, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1946.

Mackenzie, Alexander, Life and Speeches of George Brown, Toronto, Globe Printing Co., 1882.

Makers of Canada (vols.viii, x, xii, xviii, xix) Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1926.

McInnis, E., Canada, A Political and Social History, New York, Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1947.

McInnis, E., The Unguarded Frontier, New York, Doubleday, Doran and Co., Inc., 1942.

Martin, Chester(ed.), Canada in Peace and War, Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1941.

Martin, Chester, Empire and Commonwealth, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1929.

Pope, Sir Joseph, Memoirs of Sir John A. Macdonald, Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1930.

Royal Institute of International Affairs, The British Empire, London, Oxford University Press, 1937.

Skelton, O.D., The Day of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Toronto, Glasgow, Brook and Co., 1916.

Skelton, O.D., Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, (2 vols.), New.York, The Century Co., 1922.

Wittke, C., A History of Canada, New York, F.S. Crofts and Co., 1939.

C. References dealing with International Affairs:

Brandenburg, E., From Bismarck to the World War, London, Oxford University Press, 1933.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 14th ed., New York, 1929.

Fay, S.B., The Origins of the World War (2 vols.), New York, The MacMillan Co., 1929.

Fisher, H.A.L., A History of Europe, vol.iii, London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1936.

Gooch, G.P., History of Modern Europe, 1878-1919, New York, Henry Holt and Co., 1922.

Grant and Temberley, Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,(1789-1939), London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1945.

Hudson, G.F., The Far East in World Politics, London, Oxford University Press, 1939.

Lippman, W., U.S. Foreign Policy, Boston, Little, Brown and Co., 1943.

Schmidt, B.E., The Coming of the War, 1914 (2 vols.) New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930.

Spender, J.A., Fifty Years of Europe, London, Cassell and Co., 1933.

Ward, Sir. A.W. and Gooch, G.P.(eds.) The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, 1783-1919, (vol.iii), Cambridge, University Press, 1923.

B29755